

Pet Dental Health MONTH



Veterinarian's guide to gum disease in dogs and cats

Facts about gum disease:

According to the Australian and American Veterinary Dental Societies, more than 80% of dogs and 70% of cats develop gum disease by the age of three.

Periodontal disease in pets can often go undetected for years, despite the fact it causes pain and discomfort.

Annual dental check-ups and ongoing dental care can prevent some of the serious side effects of gum disease.

Periodontal disease is the most common disease seen in dogs and cats. It's more common than any other disease including those of the skin, eyes, ears or heart.

Gum disease can lead to infections in the kidney, heart and liver, and even fractured jaws.

Plaque and tartar contain a multitude of bacteria and toxins that can spread to other parts of the body.

Common signs of gum disease include bad breath, inflamed gums, broken teeth and in some cases a reluctance to eat.

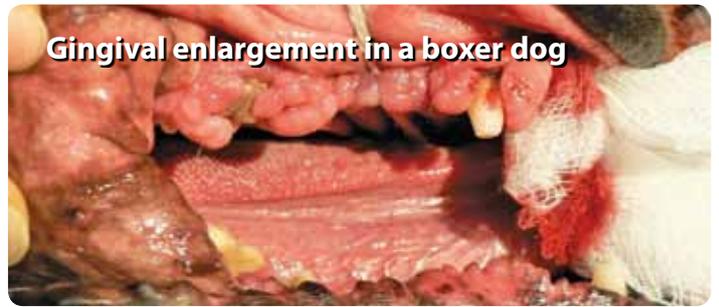


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The Australian
Veterinary Association





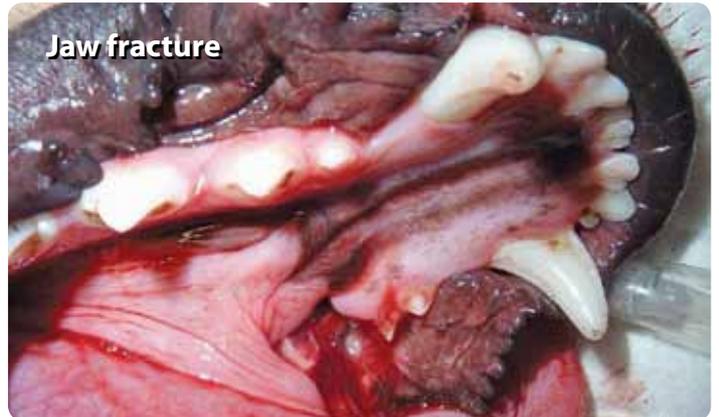
This oronasal fistula occurred after the canine tooth was extracted. The fistula needs to be repaired with a gingival flap to cover the communication into the nasal cavity. Fistulas are more common in long-snouted breeds such as Dachshunds, Italian Greyhounds and Whippets. The fistula is usually related to periodontal disease.



Boxers can have an inherited trait where their gum tissue becomes enlarged and overgrows the teeth. It's treated by cutting back the overgrown gum (all done under general anaesthetic) and getting the owners to practice good homecare and toothbrushing. It can however recur at a later date and may need to be retreated.



Grade 4 periodontal disease is the most severe stage of this disease and involves significant bone loss around some if not all of the teeth. This dog has heavy calculus build up with also bone loss around the teeth especially involving the upper canine tooth and the upper 4th premolar tooth. Management of periodontal disease involves a thorough dental cleaning under general anaesthetic and removal of plaque and calculus as well as sometimes the need to extract badly affected teeth. Owners also need to practice good homecare to control this disease. This will include regular toothbrushing and other plaque reducing measures such as special dental diets.



This young Labrador dog has broken his lower jaw on the right side due to a motor car accident. Notice that the jaw deviates to the right side and you can see exposed jaw bone. This dog had to have his jaw wired so that the fracture could heal.



This is an acanthomatous ameloblastoma tumour (just in front of the lower canine tooth) in a Boxer dog. It involves the rostral (front) of the lower jaw. It is a benign tumour but it requires removal of that part of the jaw to successfully remove the tumour.



This is a dental malocclusion where the lower canine teeth are lingual (inside) of the upper canine teeth. There is usually pain associated with this condition and damage to the roof of the mouth. This condition will require professional attention from a vet.



This involves most of the crown of the lower 1st molar tooth. This lesion is painful and requires that the tooth be extracted.



This is a complex crown fracture with pulp exposed (red area in centre of tooth). This tooth will be painful and requires immediate professional attention from a vet.