



## Periodontal Disease

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Complete Oral examination

### Therapeutic Plan

Removal of plaque and tartar  
above and below the gumline  
Tooth polishing  
Tooth Extraction  
Periodontal Surgery  
Antimicrobials  
Effective home care including  
tooth brushing and dental food

### Nutritional Plan

Postsurgery or extractions,  
nutrition with characteristics  
that support tissue repair.  
A soft food may minimize  
post-procedural discomfort.  
Long term, a food with  
formulation and texture that  
slows the accumulation of  
plaque and tartar.

## Periodontal Disease

Your pet has periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is an inflammation of the tissues that support the teeth. It is the primary cause for early tooth loss. Periodontal disease is treated by professional dental prophylaxis or tooth scaling to remove plaque and calculus, surgery, tooth extraction and daily removal of plaque at home. This client education sheet will help you learn more about periodontal disease and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

## What You Should Know About Periodontal Disease

Plaque is a substance containing bacteria, salivary secretions and cells. Plaque accumulates on the tooth surfaces where it causes periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is the progressive inflammation and destruction of structures that support the teeth, including the gums, cementum, periodontal ligaments and bone. This results in inflammation and infection around the tooth with eventual tooth loss. Within a few days plaque mineralizes into calculus/tartar and enhances further plaque accumulation and contributes to the progression of periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease is very common. All dogs and cats are at risk for periodontal disease and more than 80% of adult dogs and cats have some degree of periodontal disease. Although periodontal disease is found more frequently in older pets, its effects start in younger animals. Inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) often develops by the time a pet is one or two years old and without proper care will progress causing irreversible damage and potentially infecting other organs such as the heart, liver and kidney.

## Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will often see signs of periodontal disease when he or she examines your pet's mouth and evaluates the gum and periodontal tissues around the teeth. Dental radiographs, blood tests and urine tests may also indicate periodontal disease.

## Treatment and Home Care

Treatment for periodontal disease depends on the severity of the disease. Dental scaling and polishing by your veterinarian will remove plaque and calculus from the teeth and from periodontal pockets. Your pet will need to be anesthetized for dental scaling. Oftentimes, your veterinarian will need to remove gum tissue if the gum pockets surrounding the teeth are deep or if cauliflower-like growths are present. Loose teeth will usually be removed.

Home care is the more important part of therapy for periodontal disease. Frequent removal of plaque from your pet's teeth will help prevent periodontal disease and tooth loss. For tips about plaque removal at home, ask your veterinarian for a copy of the Hill's Client Information Series handout titled *Reducing the Risks of Canine Periodontal Disease* or *Reducing the Risks of Feline Periodontal Disease*.

Your veterinarian will probably schedule routine office visits to check your pet's dental health. These visits will allow him or her to help you combat periodontal disease through dental scalings and other necessary procedures designed to help your pet maintain healthy teeth and gums.

## Nutritional Plan

After your pet has been treated for periodontal disease, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change. Optimal nutrition provides for a pet's need based on age and activity level, and reduces the health risks associated with feeding excess sodium, calcium, phosphorus, protein and calories. Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and also reduce the tartar and plaque that contribute to gingivitis and bad breath include Hill's® Prescription Diet® t/d® Canine and t/d® Feline Dental Health.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.