

National Pet Dental Health Month

When was the last time you flipped your pet's lips up to see his/her teeth? Never! Well it is time to, so you may be amazed at what you see! If you do not see his/her pearly whites, but instead you see yellow-brown crust and red gums, then it is time to see the dentist for a dental cleaning! Did you know that the most common disease for our pets over the age of 3 is periodontal disease! The 1st sign of periodontal disease is halitosis (bad breath). That "dog breath" is not normal for our pets. Other symptoms of periodontal disease would be red gums, loose or missing teeth, calculus, discomfort when touching the mouth or decreased eating/playing with toys. When periodontal disease is left untreated, it will lead to tooth loss, gingival (gum) and bone infections, kidney, liver, and/or heart disease. There are 2 very important ways to treat and prevent periodontal disease. The 1st part is with a professional dental cleaning. The professional dental cleaning is performed the same way a cleaning is done on our own mouth, with the exception that our pets are under a general anesthesia. We use the same instruments that our dentists use to clean the teeth above and most importantly below the gum line (where bacteria are hiding). After the cleaning we also polish the teeth, so yes, your pet will go home with bubble gum fresh breath! At the time of the professional cleaning we also evaluate and treat any areas of diseased teeth with either a local antibiotic, extraction, or referral to a board certified veterinary dentist for more advanced dental care. The 2nd part of treating and preventing periodontal disease is home care. Yes that means brushing!! Other alternatives that are VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) approved items include treats, diets, rawhides or water additives. You can view the list of approved items at VOCH.org. We will discuss with you which of these items would be best for your pet after the dental cleaning.

Every month is considered pet dental month, but in February we spotlight the need for dental care for our pets. And because of that we will be offering a **10% discount** on your pet's dental cleaning for the month of **February**. Please contact our office today to have your pet's dental cleaning scheduled!

Healthy Mouth™ Water Additive.

Home dental care is a vital part of keeping your pet's mouth clean and healthy. Brushing is still considered the gold standard of home care but it is often not being done and to make it effective it does need to be done daily to every other day. But now we can offer an alternative (or in addition to brushing) to help with home dental care, called Healthy Mouth™. Healthy Mouth™ is a safe and natural water additive that has been proven, by the Veterinary Oral Health Council, to reduce gingivitis and plaque, which is the 1st stage of periodontal disease. This product would be added to your pet's drinking water, and is safe for dogs and cats. This product will not remove the need for yearly oral exams, but will help in preventing tooth loss and pain. We will have this product available for purchase January 28th. Please contact the office for more information.

STAFF NEWS

Shelly left the practice in October. We miss her very much, but have hired LVT Jennifer Crawford.

Jennifer Crawford, LVT, VTS (Dentistry)

Jennifer joined Caring Animal Hospital in October 2012. She is originally from Michigan but for the past 8 years has been living in Alabama. She is a Veterinary Technician Specialist in Dentistry which she achieved in 2009. When she is not opening your pet's mouth to look at their teeth, you might see her on the road running as she is an avid runner. She and her husband share their home with Bo & Brady their Boston Terrier's

Nick Rochte

Our part time veterinary assistant, Hailee, has moved on to start veterinary school at MSU, (although you may see her every once in a while filling in when she can.). We have hired a new assistant, Nick Rochte. He is a senior at MSU's Lyman Briggs school and a member of the archery team. Nick has always had dogs but doesn't have one with him at his college home, so he gets his animal fix when he works at the hospital. Nick has also applied to veterinary school and we hope he will be accepted with the next class. Please welcome the new staff members, and introduce yourselves. Both are great, and we are happy to have them on our team.

Exotic Corner

Rabbit Health

Rabbits make great pets and while the average lifespan for a pet rabbit is 5-6 years, they can live for 10 or even 15 years with proper care. There are steps you can take to help your rabbit live a long and healthy life.

The most important factors are a healthy diet and plenty of exercise. Rabbits need a small amount of pellets each day, measured out for their ideal weight. They need plenty of fresh water, and they can nibble as much Timothy hay as they would like. Rabbits can also have fresh veggies, like dark leafy greens as approximately 10% of their diet each day. Treats such as fruits and sugary foods should make up less than 10% of the diet. Measuring out the food is important to prevent obesity, which is common in pet rabbits.

Another important factor in your pet rabbit's health is spaying and neutering when they are young; ideally this is done around 4-6 months of age. Spaying and neutering helps reduce the risk of certain types of cancer, reproductive diseases and behavioral problems as they mature.

As with any pet, an annual physical exam for your rabbit is very important. Please call us at Caring Animal Hospital today to set up your rabbit's physical exam! **(517)694-6766**