



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

## FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Is your kitty's breath bad enough to turn your nose away? That smell could signify a serious health risk for your pet, with the potential to damage not only your pet's teeth and gums, but internal organs too. Bad breath or drooling are signs that a kitty may be experiencing dental problems.

To focus on the importance of proper dental hygiene for pets, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and several veterinary groups have designated February as National Pet Dental Health Month.

Regular oral care can help keep your kitty happy by addressing painful dental abscesses, cavities, or toothaches. It can also reduce the risk of serious secondary conditions. When teeth are not cleaned regularly, bacteria from plaque can enter your kitty's bloodstream and cause permanent damage to organs including the heart, heart valves, lungs, liver, and kidneys. Your kitty can also experience a dental disease process unique to felines called *resorptive lesions*, where the body begins to re-absorb a diseased tooth, requiring extraction.

The first step in diagnosing and treating dental disease is a thorough oral examination for your kitty. The exam can identify potential problems such as plaque and tartar buildup, gingivitis, periodontal disease, and fractured or abscessed teeth. During the exam, your veterinarian will inspect the outer areas of your kitty's teeth and gums. The inner surfaces of the teeth and gums will then be examined, along with the tongue, upper and lower palates, and tonsils. The doctor will also palpate and assess the size and shape of the salivary glands and the lymph nodes in the neck.

If dental treatment is recommended after the examination, pre-anesthetic lab work will be done to evaluate metabolic function. (General anesthesia is necessary for most types of dental treatment, including extractions.) Once any metabolic issues are addressed, your cat will be scheduled for a dental procedure which will include dental x-rays, cleaning, and extractions (if needed). Aftercare typically includes dispensing antibiotics and pain medication at home, plus follow-up oral evaluations at our office.

If it's been awhile since your kitty last had a dental evaluation, or if your kitty has bad breath or frequent drooling, please call us to schedule an exam. And if your veterinarian recommends dental treatment after an exam, now's the perfect time to schedule the procedure—please see our February special offer below for great savings!



## SPRING IS IN THE AIR

Although the nights are still chilly, we're starting to see signs that winter will soon be behind us. And as the days grow warmer and the sun shines more often, our gardens will burst into bloom.

Lovely as they are, many flowers, if ingested, are poisonous to pets. Some may cause severe illness, and sadly, many can be deadly. Ingesting just a few petals, leaves, seeds, or parts of a bulb can be fatal.

Some of the more common toxic plants include lily, azalea, crocus, hyacinth, tulip, oleander, and daffodil bulbs. Pest balls, fertilizers, blood meal, bone meal, and insecticides can also cause illness or death.

For a more complete list of plants that are toxic to cats, dogs, and horses, please visit: [www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants](http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants)

If you suspect your pet has ingested any of these plants, seek immediate veterinary care. And please help prevent against poisoning by ensuring that your pet does not have access to toxic plants.

## FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFERS FOR OUR READERS

**Schedule your kitty's dental procedure by February 28 and you'll receive a \$100 discount!** (The appointment may be made for any future date—but you must contact us by February 28 to schedule it.)

Please call us at (916) 488-4161 or stop by our front desk for more information or to make your appointment.

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