

Canine Dentistry: What Every Dog Owner Should Know

I Didn't Know Dogs Had Dental Problems!

You're not alone! Many pet owners are surprised to learn that **dental disease is the most common condition affecting dogs and cats.**

More than **68% of pets over the age of 3** have some level of dental or periodontal disease—often without showing obvious signs. That's why routine dental checkups are so important.

Are Dental Problems in Dogs the Same as in People?

Not exactly.


- **In humans**, the most common issue is tooth decay (cavities).
 - **In dogs, periodontal disease** (infection of the gums and tooth-supporting structures) is far more common, accounting for **90%+ of dental issues.**
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What Is Periodontal Disease?

Periodontal disease refers to **inflammation or infection of the tissues surrounding the teeth.** Here's how it progresses:

1. **Plaque** forms (a sticky film of bacteria).
2. Plaque **hardens into tartar** (visible yellow/brown buildup).
3. Tartar spreads **under the gumline**, causing infection and gum recession.

4. If left untreated, the infection spreads to the tooth roots, resulting in **pain, tooth loss**, and even **infection in organs** like the **heart, kidneys, or liver**.

 **Important:** Periodontal disease often causes **chronic pain** that pets **hide well**. Early treatment makes a huge difference.

What Is Tartar and Can It Be Prevented?

- **Plaque** is an invisible film of bacteria.
- When not removed, it **hardens into tartar** and leads to **gingivitis** (gum inflammation).
- Over time, it causes **periodontal pockets** and serious dental disease.

Preventive Tips:

- **Daily brushing** with pet-safe toothpaste
 - **Dental chews**, toys, or treats approved for plaque control
 - **Special dental diets**
 - **Regular veterinary cleanings** under anesthesia
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Does Dry Food Prevent Tartar?

Dry kibble **may help reduce** plaque buildup, but **it won't remove tartar** once it's formed. Only a **professional cleaning** under anesthesia can do that.

What's Involved in a Professional Dental Cleaning?

Dental cleanings for dogs are performed **under anesthesia** and include:

- **Pre-anesthetic bloodwork** to check liver/kidney health
- **Scaling and polishing** above and below the gum line
- **Procedures:** tooth extractions
- **Pain management** and follow-up care


 You'll need to schedule the cleaning in advance, and we'll walk you through everything beforehand.

Aftercare: Keeping Teeth Clean at Home

Plaque can start forming **just 6 hours after cleaning**. Home care is critical.

We will provide:

- Brushing instructions
- Recommended dental chews or rinses
- Diet suggestions
- Info on the **canine dental vaccine** that helps prevent gum disease

 **Never use human toothpaste**—it contains ingredients unsafe for pets.

Can I Use My Pet's Annual Bloodwork for the Dental Procedure?

Yes! If your pet had **normal blood tests within the last month**, we may not need to repeat them.

Dental Report Card: How Are My Dog's Teeth?

Stage	Description	Recommendation
Normal	Clean, healthy gums and teeth. No visible plaque or tartar.	Maintain home dental care.
Stage 1–2	Mild plaque/tartar with gum inflammation. Gums may be red or sore.	Schedule a cleaning soon. Home care needed.
Stage 3	Moderate tartar with infection below the gums. Pain and swelling likely.	Schedule dental cleaning as soon as possible.
Stage 4	Severe infection with gum recession and tooth root exposure.	Immediate cleaning and possible extractions.
Stage 5	Advanced infection involving multiple tooth roots. Teeth may be loose or painful.	Urgent treatment needed. Risk of spreading infection to organs.



These pictures show the progression of periodontal disease affecting a upper fourth premolar. Daily cleaning, dental diets and regular professional cleanings can prevent this disease.