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Dental Care

Dental disease is a problem we commonly see in both dogs and cats. Plaque builds up on the teeth and leads to a build up of very solid tartar. The bacteria that are seen in dental disease can also significantly affect other organs of the body, in particular the heart, liver and kidneys. Obviously this can cause severe complications, but it can be prevented with the correct care.

In order to prevent dental disease there are a number of techniques we can use.

Brushing is by far the best method to reduce plaque. It reaches all the areas of the teeth necessary if carried out correctly and the manual scrubbing action is similar to us brushing our own teeth. Most dogs and some cats will accept brushing fairly readily if it is introduced gradually. The use of a tasty and enzymatic toothpaste can help greatly in the introduction of tooth brushing.

If tooth brushing is completely out of the question then there are other methods that can be used including dental foods, PlaqueOff, water supplements, chews (although these need to be used with caution as they are an addition to the diet) and oral rinses. Each of these will suit different pets - for advice, the nursing team run free dental checks where we can discuss this in detail.

If the plaque has developed to the point where it has formed tartar and the gums are showing signs of gingivitis and recession, we may need to consider dental treatment under general anaesthetic. Dogs and cats are very stoic and will not show their discomfort until it is very painful, so it is difficult to know how bad the problem is without a professional check-up. If your pet comes into us for a dental all the teeth are cleaned and polished, similar to if you go to the dentist yourself only under anaesthetic. Any teeth that are damaged, unstable or potentially problematic in the near future will be extracted. Pricing depends on the complexity and time taken, not the number of teeth to be extracted, as this is difficult to properly judge before the procedure.

**If you need any other information or wish to discuss any of the issues here further, please contact one of the nursing team at the Vale Veterinary Group Ltd, Kidderminster
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