



## **ACORN HOUSE VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

### **Dental Aftercare Sheet**

Your pet has had a full dental assessment under general anaesthetic. Any teeth with irreversible damage will have been extracted and the healthy teeth will have been given a thorough scale and polish so that they are completely clean.

#### **1. What should you expect when your animal comes home?**

Your pet may have slightly sore gums when they get home. This will be from either of two causes:

A. Dental scaling which involves the use of an ultra-sonic scaler, the tip of which vibrates breaking down the plaque formation. This will be run along the margin of the gum to ensure that all the plaque has been removed. This can cause pin-point bleeding from already inflamed gums.

B. A tooth extraction may have been performed if the tooth was showing signs of decay. In some cases this is only detected after a dental x-ray which enables us to look at the tooth roots. The pocket from where the tooth is removed will be sutured closed with dissolvable suture material. In some cases it is left open if there is only a very small hole or if there is severe gum recession resulting in inadequate gum left to suture over the hole.

Sore gums may make your pet feel uncomfortable for the first few days; however they should be able to eat. We advise you feed your pet soft food for the first 3-4 days. It is sometimes necessary to offer your pet highly palatable food i.e. warmed chicken soup or pilchards etc. Should your pet not want to eat we advise you contact the surgery for further advice.

Your pet may dribble after dental work and on rare occasions may vomit after the anaesthetic. Saliva and vomit could contain blood from scaling or extraction procedures. A small amount of bleeding is to be expected, however if you are at all concerned please contact the surgery for further advice.

#### **2. My pet has been sent home on medication. What is it for?**

Your pet may have been sent home with oral antibiotics. The Veterinary Surgeon will have prescribed these to help combat any bacterial infection. This course should be given as directed and all tablets must be finished. You may also have been prescribed an anti-inflammatory painkiller to help make your pet more comfortable.

### **3. What can I do to prevent further dental problems?**

If no home dental care is used, tartar will start to build up again on the remaining teeth and further dental work will be required in the future. If a programme of dental care is started now, your pet's teeth will stay clean and healthy for much longer. We recommend waiting for 1 week to allow any inflammation and soreness to subside.

#### **What are the options for dental care at home?**

- **Tooth brushing**

Daily tooth brushing is the best method for protecting your pet's teeth. We recommend that you use a soft toothbrush designed for cats or dogs. You can choose between a traditional long-handled toothbrush or a rubber brush that is worn over your finger. Make sure that you use a special pet toothpaste as the fluoride in human toothpaste can be toxic to pets and most don't like the flavour or foaming sensation. Veterinary toothpastes come in fish and poultry flavours and are safe to be swallowed.

#### Technique

Start off by introducing your pet to toothpaste by applying some to your finger or a toy. Let them lick the toothpaste and give them lots of praise and fuss. Repeat this every day for three to five days.

The next step is to place your finger with the toothpaste on it into your pet's mouth and gently massage the teeth and gums. This will get your pet used to the toothpaste and the sensation of having their mouth handled.

Once your pet is comfortable with these sessions introduce the toothbrush. Begin with just a few teeth and gradually build up the number of teeth brushed. You need to lift up your pet's lips so that you can brush the outside surface of each tooth. However, you do NOT need to open your pet's mouth and brush the inside of the teeth – most pets will not tolerate this, and it is rarely necessary since the tongue tends to keep the inside of the teeth fairly clean.

A nurse or vet will be happy to demonstrate how to brush your pet's teeth and we also have a video on our website.

- **Oral hygiene gel**

If you find it impossible to brush your pet's teeth as described above, there is some benefit to using a mouth gel such as "Logic". This gel can be squirted into the mouth of your pet, or placed on a cat's paw to be licked off. The gel sticks to the teeth and gums and helps to break down plaque and control the levels of bacteria in the mouth.

- **Dental chews and treats**

If your pet is completely uncooperative, or if you simply do not wish to brush your pet's teeth every day, there is some benefit to using specially designed dental chews/treats/foods instead. These are designed to gently scrub the outside of the pet's teeth as they chew.

- **Dental diets**

Prescription diets are available that will help to slow down the build up of tartar on your pet's teeth. These may work by mechanically rubbing against the tooth surface to work away the plaque, or by containing ingredients which slow down tartar build up and inhibit bacteria in the mouth. These diets are dry foods and can be ordered via Reception.