

# St Bernards Buzz

## don't turn away from bad breath

Does your pet have dreaded doggy breath? Don't turn away as bad breath can kill. Bad breath is generally caused by dental disease, a sneaky condition that likes to hide in your pet's mouth. Up to 80% of our pets might be suffering from this nasty disease and it is one of the most common problems we come across.

If your pet isn't having to work very hard to chew their food, plaque and tartar build up around the teeth leading to irritation of the gum and an inflammatory condition called gingivitis. Eventually the gum separates from the tooth allowing small pockets of bacteria to accumulate. This bacteria can travel around your pet's body, affecting the overall health of your pet.

***You should not ignore this disease as it is very painful and can impact the kidneys, heart and liver.***

Signs of dental disease might include:

- Bad breath (also known as 'doggy breath')
- Drooling from the mouth or poking the tongue out
- Bleeding from the mouth
- A loss of appetite or weight loss

Sometimes the signs are subtle and you may not notice anything at all. This is just another reason why regular check ups with us are important as during a routine examination we will always examine your pet's mouth.

If we diagnose dental disease early enough, we can implement a dental disease treatment plan and prevent further damage to your pet's teeth, giving you and your pet something to smile about!

## dental care at home

This is a very common question and thankfully we have lots of tools up our sleeve.

Here's our top tips:

### ***Get your pet chewing!***

Every mouthful your pet takes should be hard work! Think of what our pets would eat in the wild – chewy, sinewy food that requires ripping, tearing and crunching. This is the natural way and best way to clean the teeth.

We have excellent dry food diets available that are actually designed to clean the tooth as your pet chews. We can also advise you on the best chews and treats available when it comes to dental care. Not every chew on the market is entirely safe for your pet so it's best to ask us for the guidance.

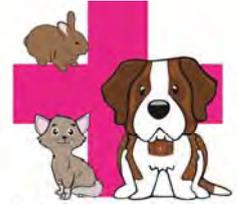
### ***Brush those pearly whites***

Believe it or not, this is considered gold standard in home care. We have tooth brushes that enable you to get into the hard to reach places. We are also happy to demonstrate brushing with your pet. Keep in mind that it can take a few months for your pet to get used to the idea. Daily brushing is recommended (in an ideal world) however a couple of times a week is better than no brushing at all! If you are using a dental paste make sure it is safe for pets (human toothpaste is toxic)

## did you say warts...

Did you know that your dog can return home from the park with more than just a wagging tail...? Your dog can catch warts! There's no need to worry but it's best to read on for all the information.

Warts are caused by the oral papilloma virus. The virus is spread through direct contact with an infected dog or via contact with a shared ball, water bowl or frisbee. The virus enters through a break in the skin and in a couple of months, warts can pop up on the lips, gums, tongue and roof of the mouth or in the throat. In some cases the warts end up growing on top of one another creating cauliflower like lesions (yuk!).



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## patient of the month

Millie's owners took her to the park a few weeks ago and noticed afterwards that she was licking her lips and holding her head up strangely. Millie was still eating and seemed herself but after a few days her owners could tell something wasn't right so bought her into St Bernard's Road Veterinary Clinic for a check up. Dr Cammy examined her and could see something brown in the side of her mouth. Millie needed to be sedated to conduct a thorough examination of her mouth and it was then discovered she had a stick very firmly lodged in the roof of her mouth. It was removed and a much happier Millie went home. Millie was a very brave girl and would be feeling much more comfortable. Most dogs love to chase and chew sticks but please discourage your dog from doing so, use durable toys and balls that are safer so as your family member doesn't

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