

# St Bernards Buzz

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## A Healthy Smile = A Healthy Pet



There is a sneaky disease which likes to hide in your pet's mouth. It is called dental disease and as many as 8 in 10 pets may be under its curse.

Dental disease is caused by food particles and bacteria that build up around the teeth. This causes irritation of the gum and leads to an inflammatory condition called gingivitis. Eventually the tooth's attachments start to break

down and the disease becomes irreversible – affecting your pet's entire health.

If your pet will allow it, gently open his mouth and have a smell! Look inside for red and swollen gums or a yellow-brown crust of tartar around the gum line. Sometimes the problem aren't as obvious and an anaesthetic is needed for a more thorough exam.

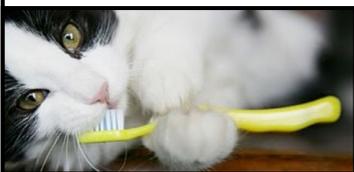
Signs of dental disease might include:

- Bad breath
- Drooling from the mouth or poking the tongue out
- Bleeding from the mouth
- A loss of appetite or weight loss

**Dental disease is a great example of why regular check-ups with us is important. There are well known links between dental disease and kidney and heart disease. If we can pick up on dental disease early, we can implement a dental disease prevention plan and we are often able to prevent further damage to your pet's teeth and health. We want to give you and your pet something to smile about!**

Dental disease is common and it does cause pain for our pets! It is so much easier to treat Grade 1 dental disease with a scale and polish, rather than to let the disease progress to stage 3 at which stage teeth are so badly diseased they need to be removed.

## Tips To Prevent Dental Disease



### • 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.

### • Dry food diets and purposeful treats

We have a range of excellent dry food diets and dental chews designed to clean the teeth as your pet chews. We can advise you on the best chews and treats as not every chew on the market is entirely safe for your pet. Ask for guidance if you are unsure.

### • Brush those pearly whites

This is considered to be the gold standard in home care. We have tooth brushes which enable you to get into the hard to reach places and finger cloths. We are also happy to demonstrate brushing with your pet. Keep in mind it may take a few months for your pet to get used to the idea. Daily brushing is recommended (in an ideal world) however a couple times a week is better than not brushing at all! If you are using a dental paste, ensure it is safe for pets (human toothpaste is toxic). We have special pet toothpaste available - flavoured to make the task a little easier!

## Patient of the Month Mariah



Mariah is a gorgeous four year Maltese cross who was diagnosed with bilateral medial patellar luxation. This is a condition when the patella, or kneecap shifts out of place towards the inside of the leg. It is considered an inherited disease which is more likely to occur in small breed dogs like Pomeranians, Yorkshire Terriers, Maltese Terriers, Chihuahuas and Toy Poodles. Her condition was considered as a grade 2 out of 4 but she has not been obviously limping according to her mother's report. This level should be considered for surgery to prevent further damage and arthritis from developing. Some vets will opt for rest and possible bracing before scheduling surgery. Mariah's lovely mum opted to go ahead with surgical intervention to keep her more comfortable on her legs. Mariah had surgery on her right knee in early July 2020 with a smooth recovery post operation. She is on strict rest and confinement with limited exercise for the next 6 weeks. Unfortunately, she has the same problem on her left hind leg which will require a similar surgery in the near future.

