

CLIENT HANDOUT

Periodontal Disease and My Dog: What Can I Do?

Periodontal disease is inflammation (which is called *gingivitis*) and infection (which is called *periodontitis*) that occur around your dog's teeth—just like the problems that can affect your own teeth. Recommendations to control and prevent gingivitis and periodontitis have traditionally included brushing your dog's teeth to remove plaque and regular dental cleanings performed by your veterinarian. Now there is a new tool in your arsenal—a vaccine that fights the bad bacteria that can destroy your dog's teeth.



HOW DO I KNOW IF MY DOG HAS PERIODONTITIS?

Your dog will likely show some common signs that his or her teeth are being affected by plaque and calculus buildup. If you are concerned about any of the following signs, you should tell your veterinarian, who can help you develop an individualized dental health care program:



- Bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- A yellow–brown crust near the gum line
- Loose teeth (or teeth have already been extracted)
- Decreased appetite or weight loss because your dog has difficulty chewing

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PREVENT PERIODONTITIS IN MY DOG?

- **Brush Your Dog's Teeth**—This is a very important part of keeping your dog's mouth in a healthy state. By brushing your dog's teeth, you are helping to stop plaque buildup. Be sure to use a toothbrush and toothpaste designed for dogs. Because some dogs are poor candidates for toothbrushing—no matter how hard you may try—there are other products that can help prevent the buildup of plaque on your dog's teeth. Ask your veterinarian for some guidance on what your options are.
- **Have Your Dog's Teeth Cleaned Regularly**—Visit your veterinarian regularly, and make sure that a dental exam is part of your dog's regular physical examination program. When your veterinarian cleans your dog's teeth, he or she will make sure your dog is pain free during the procedure (by placing your dog under anesthesia) and after the procedure (by giving your dog pain medication and an antiinflammatory drug that prevents inflammation of the gums).
- **Have Your Veterinarian Administer a New Dental Vaccine**—A new vaccine, the Porphyromonas Vaccine available from Pfizer Animal Health, helps prevent periodontitis in dogs by reducing changes that can occur to the tooth structures. Your dog will receive two doses that are given 3 weeks apart. Then your veterinarian will discuss with you how often he or she believes your dog may need additional booster vaccinations.



Don't Be Fooled—This new vaccine does not replace the need to brush your dog's teeth and have your veterinarian perform in-clinic cleanings, but it's a perfect tool to help in your dog's fight against periodontal disease.

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