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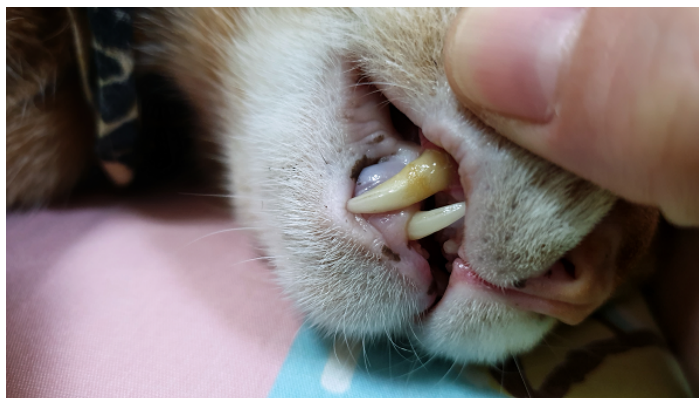
Website: <https://scottveterinaryclinic.vet/>

Dental Cleaning in Cats

When rough tartar accumulates on tooth surfaces and touches the gum line, it is time for a professional oral assessment, treatment, and prevention visit.

What is involved with a dental exam?

An examination by your veterinarian is the first step. Your veterinarian will confirm that a dental cleaning is needed and will review with you what procedures are likely required prior to the dental cleaning.



Your veterinarian may perform preanesthetic blood tests to ensure that kidney and liver function are satisfactory for anesthesia (see handout "Preanesthetic Bloodwork" for more information), as well as an evaluation of the heart and abdomen, if needed. Anesthesia is important to allow a tooth-by-tooth examination, including dental X-rays.

What happens during a professional teeth cleaning visit for my cat?

For proper dental evaluation and care, your cat must be safely placed under general anesthesia. Anesthesia allows the veterinarian to thoroughly examine the mouth, noting any abnormalities in your cat's medical record. A dental probe will be used to evaluate gum bleeding and identify periodontal pockets where food can accumulate and decay can occur if not properly cared for. The examination usually includes dental X-rays.

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When periodontal disease is advanced, affected teeth will need more advanced treatment, like extraction. This may either be recommended during the procedure or at a later time. Your cat's required treatment will be discussed with you after the cleaning, once each tooth and the surrounding gums have been checked.

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How are my cat's teeth cleaned?

After the mouth is evaluated and diseased teeth noted on your cat's medical chart, tooth scaling will be performed, using both hand and ultrasonic scalers, to remove tartar above and below the gum line. The tartar below the gum line causes the most significant periodontal disease, so its removal is important.

After scaling, the teeth are polished to remove microscopic scratches and decrease the rate of subsequent plaque build-up. Sealer application may be recommended to decrease plaque accumulation.



Why can't tartar and plaque be removed with a human dental scaler?

Although you can remove some of the accumulated tartar that is visible on the tooth in cats that are cooperative, there are problems with doing this:

- Only the visible tartar is removed. This leaves plaque and tartar below the gum line which will continue to cause periodontal problems.
- It is neither possible nor safe to clean the inner surfaces of the teeth effectively in a conscious cat.
- The use of any instrument on the tooth enamel will cause microscopic scratches on the surface which will ultimately damage the tooth surface, leading to further disease – this is the reason your dental hygienist always polishes your teeth after removing tartar with dental instruments.
- If your cat moves suddenly, the sharp instrument may cut the gums, causing pain and bleeding.

Do I have to make an appointment for my cat to have a dental scaling and polishing?

Yes. Your veterinarian will perform preanesthetic tests and examine for underlying disorders prior to the procedure and may determine that antibiotic treatment should be prescribed in advance.

How can I prevent tartar accumulation after the procedure?

Plaque and tartar begin forming in as little as six hours after your cat's dental cleaning. A home dental care program is a must. Your veterinarian will provide you with detailed instructions on how to brush or rinse your cat's teeth. Plaque and tartar accumulation can also be decreased by rubbing a Q-tip along the gum line daily. See handout "Plaque and Tartar Prevention in Cats" for further information.

The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) only accepts dental products and diets that are safe and proven to reduce the accumulation of plaque and tartar based on strict scientific studies. A list of accepted products can be viewed at www.VOHC.org and your veterinarian can advise you as well.

Can I use human toothpaste?

Absolutely not. Human toothpaste should never be used on cats. Human teeth cleaning detergents contain ingredients that are not intended to be swallowed and can cause stomach problems in cats.

You should also avoid using baking soda to clean your cat's teeth. Baking soda has a high alkaline content and, if swallowed, it can upset the acid balance in the stomach and digestive tract. In addition, baking soda does not taste good, which may cause your cat to be uncooperative when you try to brush her teeth.



Why is pet toothpaste recommended?

Pet toothpastes are considered safe to be swallowed and are available in flavors that are appealing to cats, including poultry, beef, malt, and mint. If you use a product that tastes good, your cat will be more likely to enjoy the whole experience.

In addition to the pleasant taste, many of these pet-friendly toothpastes contain enzymes that are designed to help break down plaque chemically, which reduces the time you need to spend brushing your cat's teeth.

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