

February is Dental Health Month
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Time really does fly. It's that time of year again, dental health month, and as usual Dunstable Animal Clinic is celebrating with \$50 off a scheduled scale and polish. Your pet has to be a client and have had a recent physical exam and has to be anesthetized to undergo the procedure. If you're interested please call to schedule an appointment.

It may seem silly to some people but animal oral health is as important as your own oral health. Animals get plaque and tartar, which can lead to bad breath and gingivitis (inflammation of the gums). The bacteria associated with gingivitis can get into your pet's bloodstream and adversely affect his/her kidneys, lungs, heart valves, and liver. While dogs and cats do not get cavities, cats get something very similar called FORL's. (Feline Oral Resportive Lesions) These are very painful because the root is exposed and the only know treatment is extraction. Not every animal with dental disease needs a complete scale and polish; your veterinarian can determine appropriate treatment options for your individual pet.

There are several other options to help maintain your pet's oral health. Teeth brushing is best. Pets, obviously, eat the toothpaste, so you have to use pet toothpaste. Our toothpaste has too much fluoride to be swallowed and most pets don't like mint flavoring anyway. Pet toothpaste comes in flavors such as poultry, seafood, and beef. Many pets tolerate having their teeth brushed, some actually enjoy it. There are other options for those of you unable or unwilling to brush your pet's teeth. For example you can feed your pet t/d diet, which is a prescription food available through your veterinarian. It comes in larger chunks to force the pet to chew and the design of the chunk removes some plaque and tartar while your pet eats. T/d is a balanced food, but many people just put a few kibbles on the top of every meal, or use it as treats – it's a low calorie treat for those of you trying to get your pet to lose weight. Another option is CET chews – these are prescription treats that contain chlorhexidine, which kills bacteria. Yet another option is mouth rinses, these usually contain chlorhexidine as well. You use these simply by squirting some directly into your pet's mouth. These are also designed to be swallowed. Even if your pet does need a full scale and polish under anesthesia, these options can help a little before and even more so after the procedure. Please call with any questions.