

Ask the Vet
logo

Local Veterinarian Dan Flynn from Balmoral and Commons Brae Vets is back to answer your questions about problem pet issues. If you have a question you'd like the vet to write about send it to askdanthetvet@gmail.com

Q: I have noticed my pets teeth starting to go brown and its breath is starting to smell bad, what should I do?

A.I encounter dental disease in dogs, cats and rabbits on a daily basis, a lot of this disease can be prevented with better awareness and advice, go get them checked out!

Dogs and cats

Without attention tartar will start to accumulate on teeth from as early as six months and by 1 year it will look like brown staining in the teeth. If no action is taken this will grow and form Plaque on the teeth and will start pushing up the gum line causing gum disease. This will progress to loose teeth and some root problems which is very painful to all animals.

Small dogs eg, Yorkshire terriers and Pomeranians often have weak mouths and gum disease can become a problem from an early age. With these small dogs, it can often be difficult to examine their mouths.

Cats also can be difficult to examine by owners and this is why we as vets encounter pets with advanced dental disease very often

Signs of disease:

Plaque/tartar build up.

Bad breath

Mouth pain- eating to one side, reduced appetite, increase salivation

Sometimes loose teeth can be seen and felt.

Actions:

Get some advice from your vet on the dental treatment that is required. This may be a little as a drinking water additive, or a scale and polish of the teeth under anaesthetic. Often with advanced disease we have to extract some teeth to remove the relieve the pain. Once the teeth are clean the challenge then is to keep them clean.

Gold standard is to brush teeth on a daily basis. To do this, apply doggy or cat toothpaste with finger to gum line daily.

Another way to help is to increase the use of dried or pelleted food, this helps to remove tartar that has attached to the teeth. The use of soft food alone will lead to dental disease more rapidly.

Dentastix can be useful as long as the dogs do not eat them too quickly, they are meant to be chewed over a period of time and help reduce tartar build up

Rabbits

The teeth problems with rabbits come mostly from bad diet - from an early age they need to be fed like a wild rabbits.

Grass, hay, carrot tops, kale, broccoli, are all good for rabbits, pellets should be only used as an extra not their maintenance diet.

Take action and get your pets teeth examined, it may require a scale and polish to get them clean but then it should be easier to keep clean with the correct advise

Remember, if there are any issues you would like discussed in the column let us know askdanthetvet@gmail.com