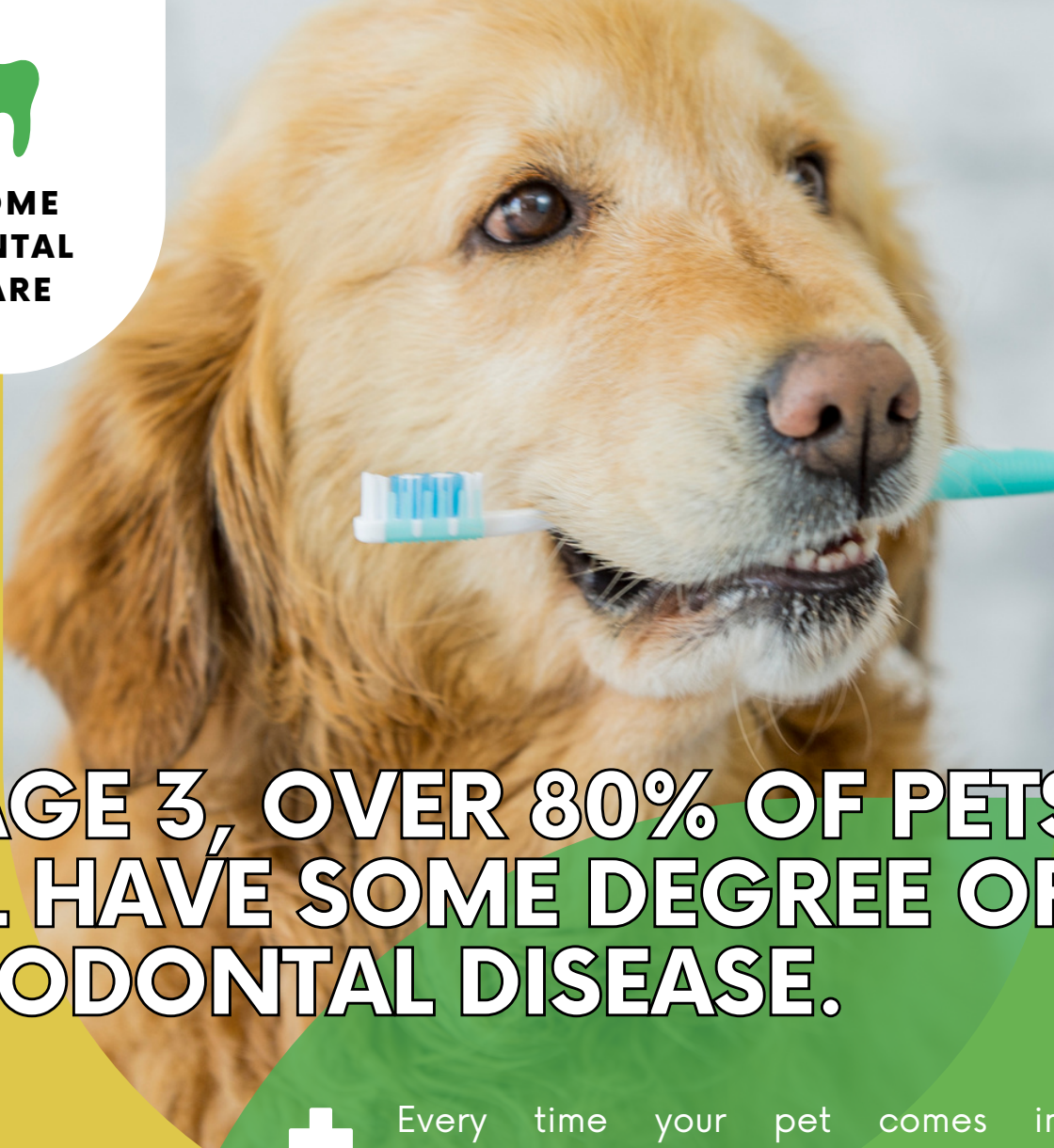
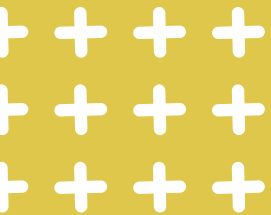




**HOME
DENTAL
CARE**




BY AGE 3, OVER 80% OF PETS WILL HAVE SOME DEGREE OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE.





Every time your pet comes in for a comprehensive physical exam, your doctor will assess the health of their teeth and gums. Unlike people, the most common disease affecting pets is periodontal disease and NOT gingivitis and cavities. Why does this matter? Periodontal disease is a more advanced stage of dental disease and thus requires more advanced treatment. Depending on your pet's needs, home care and/or an anesthetic dental exam and treatment will be recommended.

Periodontal disease is a serious and often undertreated disease in pets, so we here at Sunnyvale Veterinary Clinic feel it is important everyone understands what it is, how we manage it, and how you can help at home.

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What is Periodontal Disease?

Periodontal disease is disease and infection around the outside of the tooth. This is happening UNDERNEATH the gums and around the roots of the teeth. Because of this, the true extent of periodontal disease is only known by probing the teeth and taking x-rays. Often what we see during an exam is only the tip of the iceberg.

As bacteria sit on the teeth, they form plaque. Plaque then hardens into tartar (also known as calculus). The longer tartar stays on the teeth, the more the bacteria eat away at the bone holding the teeth in place. While gingivitis (inflammation of the gums) is reversible, periodontal disease and bone loss are not. Once enough of the bone has been lost, teeth become loose, painful, infected, and eventually die. Once teeth reach this stage of disease, they must be surgically removed to help relieve your pet of infection and pain.

Our goal at Sunnyvale Veterinary Clinic is to help you manage this disease so our pets can have cleaner, healthier, and less painful mouths! While you can treat gingivitis and plaque at home, once tartar and bone loss have started, your pet requires the care of a veterinary professional. The only way to remove tartar is during a dental cleaning under general anesthesia using an ultrasonic scaler.

How Can I Prevent Periodontal Disease?

Periodontal disease can be slowed down, but it cannot be prevented or cured. In addition to annual anesthetized dental exams and cleanings, there are several things you can do at home to help slow its progression and minimize the need for tooth extractions. The goal of this is to remove the bacteria that settles on the teeth throughout the day before it becomes tartar.

- **Toothbrushing** – This is the gold standard for every pet. You can purchase dog or cat specific toothpaste and toothbrushes at your local pet store. NEVER use human toothpaste as it is highly toxic. Your goal should be to brush at least three times a week.
- **Dental Wipes** – If your pet does not allow brushing but does allow simply touching the teeth, then these are a great option. This allows you to wipe the outer surface of the teeth to remove bacteria. Maxi/Guard Oral Cleansing Wipes work well and are available through Amazon. These should be used daily.
- **Dental Gels & Sprays** – If your pet will not allow brushing or wipes, then these are a good option. They should be applied to the outer surface of the teeth and gums once daily after their last meal. Some approved brands include HealthyMouth, Maxi/Guard, and TropiClean.
- **Water Additives** – These are typically drops added to your pet's water bowl. This allows your pet to rinse off the bacteria while drinking water. This works best in combination with toothbrushing/oral wipes.
- **Treats!** – There are several treats to choose from that help manage periodontal disease. Oravet Treats work great for dogs who love to chew. This treat has an additive in the center that coats the teeth and prevents plaque and bacteria from forming for 24 hours. If using Oravet, be sure to monitor your pet while chewing. It can be a choking hazard if left unattended. Fun Fact: All dentals here get an Oravet gel applied to their teeth. This prevents tartar from forming for 2 weeks. Greenies, Tartar Shield, Purina DentaLife, C.E.T. Veggident, Yummy Combs, and Whimzees are other approved brands. These can be used daily but may be high in calories.
- **Diet** – If your pet is not on another veterinary prescription diet, dental diets are a great option. These diets typically have a larger, chewier kibble that encourages chewing and mimics the mechanical action of brushing. These are only helpful for cleaning premolars and molars (the chewing teeth). Ask your veterinarian about options!

1. Please visit the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) for a complete list of accepted products.