

# PawPrint

The quarterly newsletter of  
Apple Valley Animal Hospital

Volume 3, Issue 4

Winter 2013



## The Dental Edition

Imagine that you haven't brushed your teeth in months. Ugh... But the same natural processes that cause us to need routine dental care are at work in our pets too. Our doctors see tartar buildup, periodontal diseases and tooth damage every day. They are the most common and most preventable medical conditions we see. These conditions cause pain, oral infections and a decline in general health. Studies show these bacterial infections invade the bloodstream through affected gums and cause liver, kidney and heart disease. The good news is that proper periodontal care adds an average of two years to a pet's life.

### About the procedure:

Our doctor will perform a pre-anesthesia exam to look for any indication that anesthesia may be unsafe for your pet. All dental patients will have pre-anesthesia blood work to further identify potential problems and help select the safest anesthesia for your pet. After anesthesia is induced a tracheal breathing tube is placed. This tube administers oxygen mixed with anesthetic gas and protects from the inhalation of bacteria laden plaque during the procedure. Your pet will be placed on a warming blanket to

help maintain optimal body temperature. At this time an examination of all teeth, gum and tongue surfaces is performed and the doctor will decide if any teeth need special treatment or extraction. We make every effort to save teeth whenever possible. Next, the teeth are ultrasonically cleaned (known as scaling). This is the same technology used by many human dentists. After scaling, the teeth are polished to remove microscopic scratches caused by chewing. If left, these scratches would provide a foothold for tar-

tar and speed its re-formation. After polishing, a final oral examination is performed and your pet is monitored during its recovery from anesthesia. The total time of the procedure is usually 35 to 45 minutes.



An adult canine tooth before cleaning. Bright red at the gum line indicates periodontal disease.

The same tooth after dental cleaning. Without the tartar, the gum will have a chance to heal.

Although we perform hundreds of dental cleanings each year, we never consider any anesthesia procedure as routine. During the cleaning your pet will be constantly monitored by the technician and a computer system which continually reads your pet's heartbeat and respiration rates, sounding an alert if there are any abnormal variations.

Visit [www.AVvets.com](http://www.AVvets.com) for more information.

### February is National Pet Dental Health Month: We're doing one better!

January 1st through February 28th we are offering **FREE dental exams and 15% off of all dental cleanings and procedures**. Last year during Pet Dental Health Month, so many owners took advantage of the savings that we had a hard time scheduling them all. Our patient's wellbeing is why we support National Pet Dental Health Month.

Call us at 685-1650 to schedule your pet's free dental exam or take advantage of Dental Month pricing.

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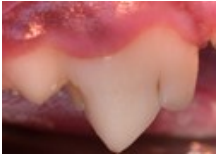
and follow our weekly pet care quiz. Enter to win !

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# Recognizing Periodontal Disease

There is an old wives tale that says pet's teeth need less dental care than our own. Actually, veterinary studies show that 85% of all dogs and cats over three years of age have periodontal disease. Studies have also shown proper dental care adds an average of two years to a life! These are the stages of dental disease.

## Healthy Teeth



Home dental care is needed to maintain these healthy teeth and gums. Brushing your pet's teeth regularly is ideal. There are also products available to help make home dental care easier.

## Stage 1 - Mild Calculus



The margin of attached gum is inflamed and swollen. Plaque covers the teeth. Home dental care is needed. If there is no improvement, dental cleaning is needed within the next year to remove plaque buildup which will develop into calculus.

## Stage 2 - Moderate Calculus



The entire gum is inflamed and swollen. The mouth is painful and odor is noticeable. Dental cleaning to remove the calculus is needed. A calculus control diet and home dental care are needed afterward to slow the reformation of calculus.

## Stage 3 - Severe Calculus and Gingivitis



The gums are cherry red and bleeding. They are damaged by infection and calculus. A sore mouth and bad breath are evident. Dental cleaning to remove calculus is needed immediately. A dental diet and home dental care are needed afterward to prevent reoccurrence.

## Stage 4 - Periodontal Disease



Chronic inflammation is destroying the gums, teeth and bone. Bacteria are spreading through the body via the blood stream and may damage the kidneys, liver and heart. Dental cleaning to remove calculus is needed immediately. A calculus control diet and home dental care are needed afterward to prevent reoccurrence.

## Meet Our Staff: Taylor

As long as she can remember, Taylor has always loved animals. As a child growing up here in Western North Carolina she was always taking care of some creature in need. As a teenager she was a summer volunteer for the Western North Carolina Nature center in Asheville. Following her passion for animals, Taylor attended Asheville Buncombe Technical College where she graduated with her degree in Veterinary Medical Technology. This winter she will sit for the North Caroli-



Taylor & Dusty

na Veterinary Medical Board's Certified Veterinary Technician Exam. We know she will do well.

Taylor and her husband live in Hendersonville with their two children Addison and Eli. Their family also includes Apollo a mixed breed dog, Macy the cat, Bellatrix the snake and Crush the Christmas turtle. Taylor and her family are big football fans (Go Panthers!). In her spare time Taylor enjoys traveling, swimming, hiking and spending time with her family.

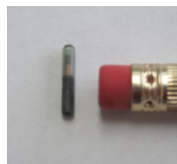
## Keeping Your Pet's Teeth Healthy

All pets will have tartar buildup over time. Daily brushing is the best form of preventive dental care for your pet. Just as in humans, brushing will remove plaque before it can firmly attach to the tooth surface and mineralize to become tartar. Other preventive options include OraVet, a home applied gel which helps prevent plaque from attaching, dental diets, treats and chew toys designed to help scrub the teeth.

**Watch For:** Bad breath ~ Changes in chewing habits  
 Subdued behavior ~ Redness at the gum line  
 Excessive drooling ~ Tartar buildup on the teeth  
 Pawing at the mouth ~ Blood on chew toys  
 Pain when eating (dropping food or pacing around the bowl)

## Microchips

Every two seconds a family pet is lost! Many never return home because they cannot be identified. Microchips are small, about the size of a grain of rice, and are injected under the skin just like a vaccine. Unlike id tags and collars, a chip is with your pet for life. Most animal control and pet shelters scan incoming pets for chips. When a chip is found, the manufacturer database provides the owners contact information.



**We recommend microchips for all our patients.**

## Meet the Breed: Consider breed characteristics when choosing a pet.

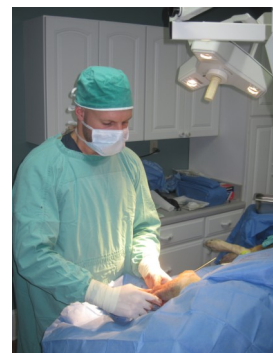
The Jack Russell Terrier, like many terriers, enjoys digging and can make quite a large hole in a short time. It's easier to train a dog to dig in a specific area than it is to break him of a digging habit. Jack Russell Terriers must have a securely fenced yard to give them room to play and burn off their abundant energy. Underground electronic fencing won't hold them. Jacks have been known to climb trees and even chain link fencing to escape their yards, so it's best if their time outdoors is supervised. First-time or timid dog owners would do well



to choose another kind of dog. The Jack can be a challenge even for an experienced dog owner. He's strong willed and requires firm and consistent training. Jacks can be recreational barkers, so they're not suited to apartment life. Aggression toward other dogs can be a serious problem with the Jack Russell Terrier if he's not taught to get along with other canines from an early age. The Jack Russell thrives when he's with his family and should not live outdoors or in a kennel. When you leave the house, try turning on a radio to help prevent separation anxiety. Jacks are bouncy and will jump up on people and things. They're capable of jumping higher than 5 feet. Jack Russell's have a strong prey drive and will take off after smaller animals. They should never be trusted off leash unless they're in a fenced area. Jack Russell Terriers have a high energy level and are active indoors and out. They need several walks per day, or several good games in the yard. They make excellent jogging companions. To get a healthy dog, never buy a puppy from a puppy mill, a pet store, or a breeder who doesn't provide health clearances or guarantees. Look for a reputable breeder who tests their dogs for genetic diseases that can be passed on to pups and breeds for sound temperaments.

## Technology Spotlight: Orthopedic surgery at AVAH

Woofie, a ten year old female Lab mix, came to us with a fractured ulna and dislocated radius. After reviewing Woofie's radiographs, Dr. McKee determined the best choice for repairing her fracture was surgical stabilization of the injury with a pin. As the radiograph shows, an appropriately sized pin is placed inside the bone aligning the bone ends. The pin chosen for this procedure had threaded portions to anchor it firmly to the bone. The procedure went smoothly with Dr. McKee reducing the dislocation and fracture then placing the pin. Radiographs were taken during the procedure to assure proper bone alignment and pin anchorage. To reduce pressure on the limb, Woofie was fitted with an external splint. Woofie was discharged with pain medications and orthopedic post-surgery care instructions. Her owner limited her activity and provided excellent post-surgical care. At Woofie's last visit her recovery was complete with no signs of her injury.



Dr. McKee performs surgery



Fractured ulna with dislocated radius



Ulna stabilized & dislocation reduced

### Notable Quotes:

"No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation as much as the dog does." -Christopher Morley

"If you are worthy of its affection, a cat will be your friend but never your slave." -Theophile Gautier

"Cats are absolute individuals, with their own ideas about everything, including the people they own." -John Dingman

"Histories are more full of examples of the fidelity of dogs than of friends." - Alexander Pope



### Drop-off Appointments: Making Your Life Easier

If your pet needs to be seen but your schedule is full, ask about a drop-off appointment. Rest assured, your pet will be treated like royalty while its here.

Likewise, if our schedule is full and your pet needs to be seen, we may suggest you drop your pet off. The doctor will work with your pet throughout the day. In either case, we will keep you informed and the doctor will call to discuss results and treatment options if any are needed.



## Tips For Bringing Your Cat to the Vet

We know it can be tough wrangling your cat for a trip to our office. Many cats dislike their cat carrier as well as riding in a car so heading in for an annual checkup can be a stressful event. These tips will help reduce your cat's stress and make your ride more peaceful.

1. Make the carrier your cat's second home. Cat carriers are typically associated with many unpleasant things. Many cat owners keep the carrier in a closet or in the garage, so the cat hasn't rubbed on it or slept inside it. Cats who haven't transferred their scent to the carrier, therefore, see it as a foreign object. So give your cat time to mark the carrier with facial rubbing---she'll feel like it belongs to her, and you may find it easier to place her inside. If you have room, make the carrier a part of your family room furniture. That means leaving it out all the time with the door open. Place a soft towel inside to make it a little more cozy. Pretty soon, your cat won't think twice about entering the carrier.
2. Turn the carrier into a meal center. Put part of your cat's daily food in the carrier to help your cat associate something good with the carrier. Even better: Use a bit of especially yummy food, like a canned variety or even a little tuna. Or try tossing your cat's favorite treat in the carrier when she wants to be left alone. This will reward her for seeking solitude in the carrier and continue to reinforce the notion that the carrier isn't so bad after all.
3. Try a different kind of carrier. If you have an emergency and don't have time to let your cat adjust to the carrier, try using a pillowcase as a carrier. With the cat on your lap, slip the pillowcase over her body, head first. Knot the top if the case and support the bottom when holding your cat. Alternately, you can use any type of item your cat likes to in---two laundry baskets connected together could also work. These items aren't a trigger for fear like the standard carrier might be.
4. Consider using a synthetic product. Using a product that contains a feline facial pheromone can help calm cats during stressful events. These products can be sprayed on blankets, towels, or bandanas before your head to the veterinarian. Many cats become less agitated when their owners use these sprays, so purchasing one could make your life easier when it's time to take your cat for a car ride.

## Winter Pet Hazards

**Dehydration:** Make sure your pet has access to plenty of **unfrozen** water while outside. We always recommend pets stay indoors during cold weather. If your pet must stay outside, make sure they have a warm shelter out of the wind.

**Frostbite & hypothermia:** Remember, if you are cold outside, so is your pet. Remember, they wear their fur coat year round so they feel hot and cold weather just like we do.

**Anti-freeze:** It smells good, tastes sweet and a very small amount can kill a pet. Watch for spills & leaks.

**Cars:** Cats can't resist a warm place to nap and during cooler weather, engine compartments are irresistible to them. If you have cats, tap the horn before starting your car.

**New Years:** Pets can be frightened by party revelry and ingesting decorations like streamers can be deadly. Keep your pet in a quiet part of the house during the new year celebration.

**Holiday Food:** Rich foods can cause vomiting and serious peritonitis while some candies are toxic to pets. Symptoms include: trembling, vomiting, diarrhea, always a good idea to watch out for pets the way you would for children.

## Coming Up!

Visit Us @:  
[www.AVvets.com](http://www.AVvets.com)

Find a wealth of pet care information, connect with your personal pet portals and get great deals from our online store.



Like Us and Blue Ridge Humane Society gets \$1.00.

During January and February we will donate \$1.00 for every new FaceBook like AVAH gets.

Like Us and join the cause!

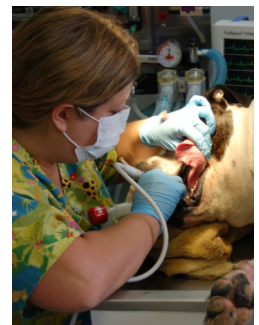


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Call our office at 685-1650 to schedule your pet's free dental examination or reduced price dental cleaning.