



Fear Free Veterinary Care For Your Furry Friends. That's Franklin Farm.

## 10 Facts You Need to Know to Protect Your Pet's Oral And Overall, Health

Written by the American Animal Hospital Association

Does your cat's bad breath keep the two of you from snuggling? Do you wish you could give your dog a breath mint? Contrary to popular belief, "doggy breath" is not normal. In fact, it could be one of the first signs that your furry pal is developing dental disease.

### What is dental disease?

Dental disease is a painful condition that occurs when bacteria, plaque, and tartar build up on the teeth and get trapped beneath the gumline. The bacteria can be absorbed into the bloodstream and wreak havoc on other major organs throughout the body. Here are 10 facts you need to know so you can be an advocate for your pet's oral (and overall) health:

1. **Dental disease begins early in life.** By the age of three, most dogs and cats have some degree of dental disease. The early signs of dental disease in pets include bad breath, yellow tartar buildup on the teeth, and red and swollen gums. Early detection of your pet's dental disease is vital. If left untreated, it will progress to cause chronic pain and inflammation. To detect dental disease before it negatively affects your pet's quality of life, AAHA recommends dental evaluations as part of your pet's regular preventive care exam, which should take place at least once a year.
2. **Dental disease causes significant, chronic pain in pets.** When dental disease is discovered later, after years of tartar, plaque, and bacteria buildup have caused infection, inflammation, and diseased teeth, your pet has already experienced significant, chronic, life-changing pain. But animals are experts at hiding signs of pain, so the pain may go unnoticed by you. Instead, you may see that your pet is

increasingly irritable and lethargic and has a decreased appetite—changes you may attribute to your pet’s advancing age or other lifestyle factors. But after a proper and thorough dental procedure, many pet owners report the emergence of “a whole new pet”—one who is happier and more active.

3. **X-rays are essential for diagnosing dental disease.** After examining dental radiographs (X-rays) of cats and dogs with teeth that appeared normal to the naked eye, veterinarians found 27.8% of dogs and 401.7% of cats had diseased teeth. In pets with abnormal-looking teeth, veterinarians found additional diseased teeth in 50% of dogs and 53% of cats.
4. **Anesthesia makes dental evaluation and treatment safer and less stressful for your pet.** During your pet’s dental procedure, veterinarians and technicians use sharp, sterilized instruments. Animals don’t like to hold still while X-rays are taken and these sharp instruments are used to clean their teeth. Placing your pet under anesthesia during the procedure allows your veterinarian to make a more accurate diagnosis and decrease the chance of complications. Your pet will rest comfortably while the veterinary team safely performs a thorough and proper dental cleaning.
5. **Anesthesia is much safer than you may think.** Before anesthesia, your pet will be carefully screened with bloodwork and other tests to ensure she is free from underlying disease. During the dental procedure, a trained professional will be dedicated to continuously monitoring, recording vital signs, and communicating the findings to the veterinarian.
6. **Nonanesthetic dentistry is stressful, unsafe, and ineffective.** Imagine multiple strangers holding you down and speaking a language you don’t understand. They’re shining bright lights in your face and inserting sharp, scary instruments into your mouth that pinch and poke. This is what your pet would endure during a nonanesthetic dental procedure. Without anesthesia, it’s impossible to obtain X-rays to see what lies beneath your pet’s gumline. It is also impossible to safely and effectively clean the teeth using those sharp instruments while the pet is awake.
7. **Removing plaque from teeth beneath the gumline is vital.** In fact, it’s even more important than scaling the portion of the teeth we can see. Bacteria thrive under the gumline, causing infections deep in the tooth root and jaw that can spread throughout the body and affect other organs, such as the heart and kidneys.

8. **Your veterinarian may create a personalized pain protocol to keep your pet comfortable.** Although your pet will be anesthetized during a tooth extraction, numbing medications will decrease the amount of general anesthetic needed and can last up to eight hours after the procedure, allowing your pet to rest in comfort. Your veterinarian can tailor your pet's prescription pain medication to match the procedure so he'll recover peacefully at home.
9. **Homecare is an essential part of taking care of your pet's oral health.** Brushing your cat or dog's teeth every day will promote good oral health and prevent potentially expensive surgeries down the road. It's easier than you think: There are even special pet toothpastes flavored like beef, chicken, fish, and peanut butter. (Note: Never use human toothpaste, which can contain ingredients like xylitol that are toxic to animals.) Also, the accumulation of plaque and tartar can be prevented by feeding your pet a special dental diet—food that's specifically designed to help preserve oral health.
10. **Not all pet dental products are created equal.** If you aren't able to brush your pet's teeth as often as you'd like, consider using other dental products designed to help maintain your pet's oral hygiene. Be sure to look for products approved by the [Veterinary Oral Health Council \(VOHC\)](#). Products that aren't approved by the VOHC, or those that are too hard to bend or break easily—like animal antlers and bones, synthetic bones, and others—can easily fracture your pet's teeth.

Since maintaining oral health is crucial to keeping cats and dogs healthy and happy, AAHA created dental care guidelines to help your veterinary healthcare team provide top-notch care. Learn more about the [2019 AAHA Dental Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats](#).





## PetDesk is Here!

We have a new interactive communication tool for your pet's health called PetDesk. It is a mobile app where you will receive reminders for your pet's health care, access your pet's vaccine information and appointment history, access to refill history and has informative pet related articles. You can utilize the app for 24/7 online booking, request prescription refills, receive lab work results and you can receive text updates from our hospital staff.

Download the app now!



## Dogs Corner



**Dog Fact:** The French Bulldog is the single most popular lap dog in America. They resemble mini bull dogs, though they have upright triangular ears, also known as the “bat ears.”

French Bulldogs make excellent watchdogs thanks to their alertness, but don’t expect them to do a lot of guard work. They have mild balanced temperaments and are good with children. They are active and love to play. They are big charmers, very adaptable and mesh well with everyone.

## Cats Corner



**Cat Fact:** The Chartreux cat is a French cat whose pleasant demeanor has made it the unofficial cat of France. The breed is recognized by its blue-gray coat, slight woolly texture and bright copper eyes.

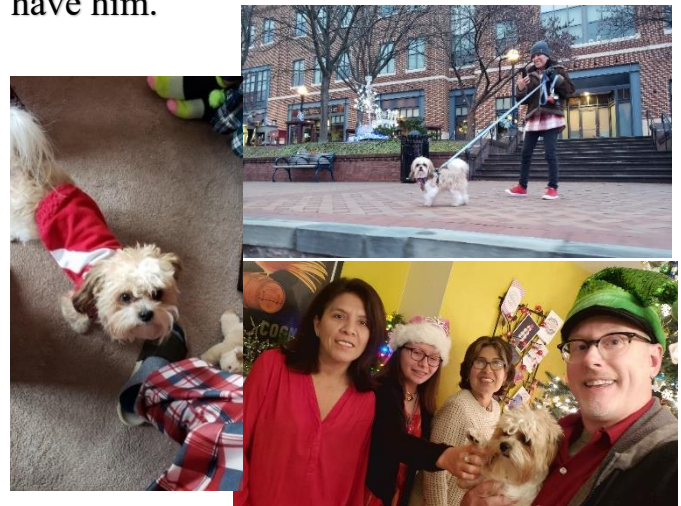
Chartreux cats are known for their “smile” due to the structure of their heads and their tapered muzzles, they often appear to be smiling. Chartreux are exceptional hunters and are highly prized by farmers.

## Pet of the Month – Mochi

Written by Megan and Mochi’s Family

Mochi is a friendly three-year-old Shorkie (a mix between a Shih Tzu and a Yorkie) who loves everyone he meets. He came from a litter of seven puppies and still gets to visit them and his furry mom and dad occasionally. He gets very excited when it's time to go somewhere in the car and jumps right up and into his car seat. He spent two months in Peru in the summer of 2022 and had a fantastic time meeting many dogs at the neighborhood park, daily. Mochi loves crinkly toys, squeak toys, and chew sticks, though he constantly hides bits of his treats in odd places. One of his absolute favorite things is jumping in a crinkly bag from IKEA and rolling around.

Mochi loves taking long walks and being outside. He is well known around his neighborhood and the surrounding area; he wants to meet every dog and person he can. Although he is only about seven and a half pounds, he gives his family and friends tons of love. His family members feel lucky to have him.



## PET DENTAL AWARENESS:

In observation of National Pet Dental Health Awareness, book your pet's dental cleaning and oral health exam during February and continuing into March and receive \$100.00 off the cost of the dental cleaning and comprehensive oral exam.

## RUFFerral Program:

At Franklin Farm we believe "RUFFerrals" are the greatest form of flattery. Refer a friend and your pet will receive a \$25.00 credit at your next appointment. Your referral's pet will receive a FREE bag of treats at their first appointment.



## Celebrations in February:

National Pet Dental Awareness Month is celebrated this month as a reminder to schedule a dental cleaning and oral health assessment for your pet(s) for optimum pet health.

## Cancellation Policy:

Hello Everyone:

We need your help! If you are unable to keep your appointment for any reason, please call

CONTACT FFVC \* [www.franklinfarmvet.com](http://www.franklinfarmvet.com) \* 703-435-3335 \* 13320-J Franklin Farm Road, Herndon, VA 20171

to reschedule or cancel the appointment more than 24 hours in advance of your scheduled appointment time.

This allows ample time for other clients to call and get their fur babies seen.

We understand that you all have a lot going on in your lives and unexpected things pop up, so please remember to contact us **more than 24 hours** in advance of your scheduled appointment time.

We have implemented a Cancellation Policy, as follows:

If you need to reschedule or cancel your appointment, please do so **more than 24 hours** in advance of your appointment time. If you reschedule/cancel less than 24 hours leading up to your appointment, or no show, you will be charged for the office visit fee correlating to your appointment.

When you reschedule or cancel **more than 24 hours** in advance, it allows other patients to be seen in your rescheduled/canceled spot. This ensures the best opportunity for care for all of our patients.

Thank you for your anticipated assistance!

