

# CROSSROADS VETERINARY CLINIC

## DENTAL DISCHARGE AND HOME CARE INSTRUCTION SHEET

In order to provide the highest quality dental care for your pet, we are sending home this dental "report card". We want to give you information for your pet's continued care at home. **Regardless of the procedure performed, success will not be achieved without regular home care.**

The Dental Report contains "before and after" digital photographs. These photos will help you see the difference that proper dentistry can make in your pet's health.

Now that you can see the difference complete oral health assessment and treatment can make, we must maintain your pet's clean teeth to prevent further dental disease.

**This can only be accomplished by adequate brushing and life style changes that include proper brushing technique, proper diet, and approved chew toys. Success depends on your willingness and ability to provide daily brushing. Remember "you only have to brush the teeth you want to keep!"**

Within hours after we perform a complete dental cleaning, plaque begins to accumulate again. This plaque will mineralize and become calculus or tartar within 48-72 hours if not removed. Regardless of what you may hear from well-intentioned friends or in advertisements, **the removal of plaque can only be accomplished by the mechanical action of toothbrush bristles above and below the gum line.** Devices such as gauze pads, rubber finger brushes, sponges, or Q-tips (while better than no care), are not adequate to clean the oral cavity in pets.

We have access to every product on the market for cleaning and maintaining your pets' oral health. While you will find many cheaper products at discount stores and mail order catalogues, our doctors have devoted much time and extra training to find products that provide the best care and value. Therefore, we only recommend the following products for home care and we will provide instruction in the proper use of the products we are dispensing for home care.

### TECHNIQUE FOR BRUSHING

1) Use the dual head toothbrush dispensed – each pet should have its own brush. Wash it thoroughly after each use to keep it clean.

2) Try to brush at the same time daily. Try to do it at a time when you are not hurried and can spend quality time with your pet. Rewards and petting are the keys to convincing your pet that brushing is a fun event and not torture or punishment.

3) Apply Maxigard Oral Gel or Dentacetic Gel to the brush.

4) Put your pet up on a bench or table at a comfortable level for you to work. Begin by petting and rubbing the head. Hold the head at a position that is comfortable for the pet. Using one hand, gently lift the lips, leaving the mouth closed. Use the brush to make small circles at a 45 degree angle to the gum line. Pay special attention to the outside (or buccal) side of the teeth as this is where plaque accumulates first. The double-sided nature of the Petosan toothbrush will allow easy access to all sides of the teeth.

5) Repeat on the other side of the mouth. Brush the upper and lower teeth and then the front incisors and canine (fang) teeth.

6) Reward with petting, kind words, and an approved treat listed below.

If your pet is anxious about brushing, don't fight it, but be firm in resolve. This is a necessary task. Start off slowly and strive for small advances. Set a goal and stick to it. Some animals will only take a few days to accept brushing, and some may take up to a month. If you have problems getting your pet to accept home care, feel free to schedule an appointment and our staff will counsel you and your pet on how to achieve our goals.

## DIET AND CHEW TOYS

Now that we have discussed brushing technique, the last part of the equation for complete oral health is life style change. This involves diet and chewing exercise.

**We recommend all dogs and cats be fed a dry ration.** It is not only more cost effective, but will also help reduce plaque and calculus formation.

There are prescription diets made specifically to reduce tartar. These diets work due to the physical make up of the kibble. The fibers of the products are arranged differently than in most foods, causing them to crumble in a different manner when chewed. These fibers act as a "squeegee" on the tooth surface to reduce the amount of food particles and plaque that cling to teeth. These diets are:

Proplan DH- (Dental Health) We stock this diet for dogs and cats.

Hills T/D (Tartar Control Diet)

Science Diet Oral Care

Eukanuba Dental Defense

Friskies Dental Diet for Cats

All dogs need to chew – it is their nature. We unfortunately see many tooth injuries related to chewing the wrong items. These result in broken teeth and gum lacerations.

What can my dog use for chewing? We recommend the knee cap test. If you can hit your knee cap with the toy and not cause pain, then the toy is probably soft enough to use as a chew.

We recommend only 2 types of chews which we stock and dispense.

C.E.T. Enzymatic Chews: These strips contain dental enzymes to help remove plaque.

Dentacetic Dentees Stars

KONG toys are also acceptable.

### CHEW TOY "NO-NOS"

The following items can cause severe tooth damage:

Cow hooves

Nylon bones

Ice cubes

Tennis balls

Ropes

Hard plastic toys

We hope this information is useful. We want to work as a team with you and your pet to promote a long, healthy life. If you have any questions regarding dental care, please contact us any time. We will be glad to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.