

Oakwood Veterinary Hospital

December 1, 2017

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February is National Pet Dental Awareness Month

Dr. Jeffrey Mason

Most of us know how important it is to take good care of our teeth, but did you know that oral health is also very important in our pets? The most common disease in our pets is periodontal disease and they are likely to have other oral problems as well, such as fractured teeth, tooth root abscess, bone loss and in some cases, they can even have cavities. Problems in the mouth can allow an increased bacterial



load into the blood stream which can cause progression of heart, kidney and liver disease. Dental disease is painful, but our pets display pain differently than we do as humans. Most dogs and cats are stoic when it comes to chronic pain and will not cry or whine unless the pain is due to a sudden problem. They can become withdrawn or temperamental, but they may not act very different at all.

There are some things you can do at home to watch for signs of dental disease. Look in your pet's mouth often, if you see that the gums are red and inflamed, if their breath is bad or if you see tartar or pus at the gum line you should schedule an exam right away. If it is appropriate, we can then schedule an anesthetic dental cleaning, which will allow us to not just clean and evaluate above the gum line but below the gum line as well.

DID YOU KNOW?

80% of dogs & 70% of cats have some form of dental disease by the age of 3!

STEPS OF DENTAL CLEANING

- 1 **ORAL EXAMINATION:** Your veterinarian will perform an oral examination prior to your pet going under anesthesia and then again before cleaning. This will help us get a general idea of the condition of your pet's mouth.
- 2 **RADIOGRAPHS:** If warranted by a veterinarian, the first step after your animal has undergone anesthesia is radiographs. These radiographs help us determine root infection, degeneration, and bone loss of each tooth. We use this tool to help determine which teeth need to be extracted. Keep in mind you only see a third of the tooth... the rest is under the gum line and can only be seen with dental radiographs!
- 3 **SCALING:** We use an ultrasonic scaler to get rid of tartar and to clean above the gum line. Hand tools are used below the gum line to make sure we're cleaning as much of the tooth as possible.
- 4 **CHARTING:** We make sure to chart the condition of each tooth. This includes pocket depth, severity of tartar, recession, and missing teeth. We keep the chart in your pet's file to reference for future dentals or oral exams!
- 5 **POLISHING:** Minor tooth surface defects are smoothed out with our polishing unit. This helps make the teeth resistant to plaque formation in the future.

COMMON SIGNS OF DENTAL DISEASE

- Bad breath
- Discomfort while eating
- Excessive salivation
- Pawing at mouth
- Bleeding gums
- Tartar on teeth
- Loss of appetite

Ho-Ho-Holiday Toxicities!

Dr. K.C. VanFleet

It's the holiday season and it's time to deck the halls and indulge in all our holiday favorites. However, this doesn't mean that our fur children can enjoy the same things we can. There are many holiday hazards that the staff at Oakwood Veterinary Hospital would like you to be aware of and avoid in our four-legged loved ones. In the event that your pet eats something and you have any questions, please feel free to call us at Oakwood. Here are a few toxicities to keep away from your pets!



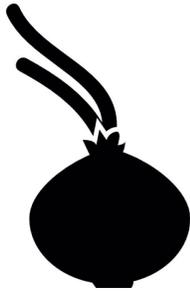
Mistletoe



Mistletoe ingestion is very systemically toxic. When consumed it can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and cardiac issues. If your pet consumes this plant, please call your veterinarian as soon as possible. If you do have mistletoes around your house, be sure to hang them high enough where your pets can't get to them.

Onions, Garlic, Chives

All three of these vegetables contain chemicals that cause gastrointestinal irritation and cause oxidative damage to your pet's red blood cells. Cats are particularly sensitive to these chemicals whereas dogs typically need chronic ingestion of these vegetables to show clinical toxicity.

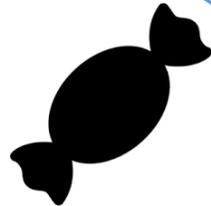


Sugar Free Candy

Sugar free candy or gum is extremely toxic to both cats and dogs. These products often contain Xylitol.

This is a sugar free sweetener product. When animals consume xylitol, their blood glucose will drop to a dangerous low level, causing seizures, coma, and even death. Xylitol can also affect the liver once the low blood sugar has resolved.

Always keep sugar free gums and candy away from our fur children. If your pet consumes this, please seek medical attention immediately.



Alcoholic Beverages

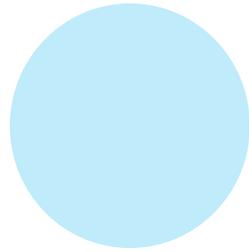
Although it may make dealing with the in-laws easier, that's not the case for our four-legged loved ones. These chemicals have similar effects on our fur children. In small doses they can cause incoordination, depression, lethargy. In higher doses they cause vomiting, diarrhea and in severe cases even coma or death. Under no circumstances should animals be allowed to consume alcohol.



Tinsel

Kitties love to play with this shiny piece of plastic. Tinsel may look a lot like some of their normal cat toys. However, these long strands, if consumed, can cause a life-threatening gastrointestinal blockage. It is best to avoid tinsel at all costs if there are cats or curious dogs in the house.

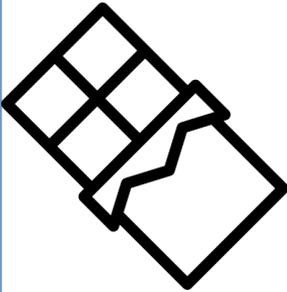




Chocolate

Products containing chocolate have a chemical known as theobromine. This chemical is directly toxic to dogs and cats. The signs which it causes can vary from vomiting and diarrhea, to tremors, seizures, heart arrhythmias and death in severe cases. The severity of the toxicity varies

based on the cocoa concentration of the chocolate. The darker the chocolate, the more toxic the chocolate. Dark chocolate is more toxic than milk chocolate which is more toxic than baked goods with chocolate. *If your animal consumes chocolate, please call us at Oakwood. We will ask how many ounces of chocolate your pet ate, what type of chocolate they ate, your pet's body weight, and how long ago they consumed it. This will help us determine the next steps in your pet's care.*



Poinsettias

These decorative holiday plants contain oxalate crystals. While the chemical in this plant is overrated in its systemic toxicity, when consumed they cause severe tissue irritation in the mouth and often cause vomiting and nausea. This plant is not systemically toxic rather locally irritating. Its best to keep Poinsettias up and out of reach from dogs and cats.

Fatty Foods

Our pet's gastrointestinal tracts were not designed to digest high fat foods. When we sneak them fatty snacks from the dinner table, this can cause massive inflammation of their pancreas. Pancreatitis can present as vomiting, diarrhea, and inappetence. This can result in hospitalizations, IV fluid therapy, and a long road of digestive issues. So even though they may look up at you with those cute eyes and beg, just say no.



Emergency Contact Resources

* ASPCA Animal Poison Control

Phone: (888) 426-4435

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>

* Oakwood Veterinary Hospital

Phone: (231) 941-7241

Hours: Mon-Fri 8-5 & Sat 8-12

<http://www.oakwoodvethospital.com/>

* For After Hours Emergency: Bay Area Pet Hospital

Phone: (231) 922-0911

<http://www.bayareapethospitals.com/bay-area>



Pre-Anesthetic Bloodwork

Paula Hock, LVT

When you come in to drop your pet off for an anesthetic or surgical procedure, there's a form we ask you to fill out before you leave. One of the questions on the form is whether or not you'd like us to run pre-anesthetic bloodwork. In many (but not all) cases, this is an option that you as the owner gets to choose. As technicians, we get asked about frequently.

What is pre-anesthetic bloodwork? It is a snapshot of how healthy your furry companion's organs are at that exact moment in time when the blood is drawn. It tells us about blood sugar, liver and kidney function, white and red blood cell count along with platelets. Based on these values it is a priceless tool that helps us decide if it is safe to continue with their procedure (i.e. spay, neuter, tumor removal,

etc.). It is more than two pieces of paper with a bunch of numbers on it; it helps the doctor you trust to determine the safest way to proceed. There are times when bloodwork is printed that a phone call has to be made to let someone know that the doctor does not feel comfortable at that time to put a pet under anesthesia. A plan would then be made with your help to figure out the next course of action. Occasionally blood values can be slightly outside of the normal range but it still may be decided that a change in drug protocol will still make it safe enough to proceed, keeping in mind that any pet that comes into our clinic is closely monitored from the time they enter

the building until they go home. Analyzing bloodwork is not just a doctor's job but a technicians' also. For example, if there are values on the CBC (complete blood count) portion of the bloodwork that is outside the normal range, the doctor may ask one of us to perform a blood smear to evaluate the actual structure of the cells under the microscope and manually count cells to ensure the greatest accuracy.

The question that we get asked on a daily basis is: "My pet is only ___ months/years old and they are acting fine, do I need to do pre-anesthetic bloodwork?" It is often times amazing how healthy our pets

may seem, but the truth is we cannot tell organ function merely by looking at them. Having bloodwork done at a young age gives us the ability to have a baseline of "normal" values for your pet in the event they become ill or have an emergency.

We recommend having bloodwork done if it is your pet's first time going under anesthesia because it is the most accurate way to assess and address any underlying health risks. The doctor may also highly recommend bloodwork if there were any abnormal levels last time bloodwork was done. This helps us evaluate if function is improving, staying the same or decreasing.

If you have any questions about bloodwork for your pets, do not hesitate to ask a technician or veterinarian!



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Visit us at our website:

<http://www.oakwoodvethospital.com/>

Oakwood celebrates

40 YEARS

on December 7th!

We couldn't do it without YOU!

Oakwood needs your help!

We always accept and appreciate donations of your old blankets and towels you're no longer using! We use them to keep our patients comfortable and cozy here in the hospital.



OAKWOOD VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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Monday-Thursday 7:30am-5pm

Saturday 8am-12pm