

## FOCUS ON DENTISTRY

### CAUSES OF DENTAL DISEASE:

- PLAQUE – a colourless film on the surface of teeth that contains large amounts of bacteria – plaque accumulation and tartar formation creates infection which destroys gums and the bone that supports teeth
- All pets are at risk

### SIGNS OF DENTAL DISEASE: *Watch for these signs*

- Bad breath, tartar accumulation, dark red or bleeding gums, drooling, abnormal chewing (may be chewing on one side of the mouth), swallowing food whole.
- Pets do not show signs of oral pain like we do – we hear back from clients almost universally that pets have changed dramatically for the better after we have completed dental cleaning or corrected other dental problems that had originally gone undetected.

### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

- Poor oral hygiene - poor diet, lack of home care program
- Breed – more common in smaller breeds of dogs and certain breeds of cats
- Age – more common as pets grow older

### ORAL HEALTH AND OVERALL HEALTH:

- Studies have shown an association between periodontal disease and changes in specific organs – heart, liver and kidney – these organs are innocent bystanders being damaged by bacteria entering the bloodstream at the site of oral infection.

### PREVENTION - WHAT YOU CAN DO :

- Have a thorough oral examination at least once yearly for young pets and twice yearly for older pets (over 7 years of age)
- Start a home care program that is personalized for your pet and your lifestyle which may include:
  - ❖ BRUSHING – this is the most effective way to remove plaque – we can help you with instructions, demonstrations, brochures and we provide brushes and pet tooth paste samples.
  - ❖ DIET – We recommend MediCal Dental Formula – available in feline and canine formulas – formulated to prevent and reduce tartar
  - ❖ TOYS – toys are available that can help reduce tartar – check out our “Toy Box” and see what we recommend