



## TEETH CLEANING

### **WHAT IS TARTAR AND GINGIVITIS:**

Tartar, or dental calculus, is the buildup of food, bacteria, and other residues on teeth that lead to gum infections or gingivitis.

### **CAN DIRTY TEETH BE HARMFUL?**

Dirty teeth will cause bad breath, eventual loss of teeth due to infections; and may even lead to generalized infections due to bacteria entering the blood stream. Heart disease and kidney disease is very common as a result of "dirty teeth."

### **WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU CLEAN TEETH?**

Your pet is given a physical exam and any needed laboratory work to insure their well-being before the procedure. Your pet is then sedated with the same medications utilized in human medicine. Teeth are then hand-scaled, cleaned with ultra-sound equipment, and polished, very similar to a human dentist. A fluoride treatment is then applied. Necessary extractions are performed when the teeth's roots have been destroyed by infection.

### **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?**

Your pet should have no food after 8:00 p.m. the night before your scheduled appointment. Water is allowed free choice at all times. We request that you bring your pet to the hospital between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., so that we can start the procedure early in the morning. This allows your pet to go home earlier the same afternoon.

### **WHAT ABOUT EXTRACTIONS?**

Only the veterinarian can determine which teeth should be extracted, and which loose teeth can be saved. This is often impossible to determine until your pet is properly sedated, due to the possible pain in the gum area.

### **WHAT ABOUT ANTIBIOTICS?**

Antibiotics are often given before, and then after the dental cleaning (and possible extractions) to fight any bacteria present. In many severe infections, antibiotics will be prescribed for several days and then an appointment is scheduled for a recheck. Be **SURE** to continue antibiotics until instructed not to do so! Use the entire contents of any prescribed medications before stopping.

### **WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME AFTER CLEANING?**

Daily brushing is recommended but not always possible. We also recommend tooth-friendly treats that help keep tartar to a minimum. Many pets (especially over 5 years of age) will require dental cleaning procedures every 6-12 months to maintain optimum oral hygiene.