

## Campus Veterinary Clinic

Your Pets are our Pets

### Campus Critter Chronicles

February is *National Pet Dental Health Month* and Campus Veterinary Clinic would like to remind you of the importance of keeping your pet's smile happy and healthy. Outside of the aesthetic values – who *doesn't* like a kitty with a wide row of pearly whites – helping your pet maintain good dental hygiene will help prevent future pains for your pet... not to mention future pains for your wallet. At the core of good dental hygiene is adopting a “preventative” mindset.

Dental disease in pets finds its roots (no pun intended) in causes similar to those in human dental disorders. The biggest difference, though, is the most obvious one: people can care for their own teeth by brushing daily! Bacteria in the mouth combines with saliva and food debris to form plaque. Plaque begins to build in layers, creating an unhealthy nuisance called *dental tartar*. The cycle of plaque build-up continues to accumulate atop the dental tartar resulting in *calculus*. While plaque itself is soft and can be brushed away, tartar and calculus are hard, or *mineralized*, and can only be removed effectively through the use of special veterinary devices and instruments.

As with humans, tartar and calculus continues to attract bacteria in and under the gum line. This leads to irritation of gum tissue, or the dreaded monster known as *gingivitis*! So as you can see, dental disease has a true-blue “snowball” effect that begins with something manageable (like plaque) and ends with something costly for you and painful for your animal (like infections, bone decay and tooth loss).

In keeping with a preventative mindset let us offer a few suggestions in keeping your animal's grill sparkling clean and pain free:

- **Give your pet the “Breath Test:** Take a whiff! Don't expect to smell roses, but your kitty's breath shouldn't smell offensive either. Foul scented breath is a good indication of periodontal disease.



- **Get a Good Look.** Did you know that Campus Veterinary Clinic offers free Dental Exams? Let us provide you with a complete assessment of your pet's dental health, complete with strengths, weakness, and areas of concern.
- **Brush, brush, brush!** Brushing your pet's teeth on a *daily* basis may sound overwhelming, but as is the case with human dental health, it's at the forefront of preventative care.
- **Consider your pet's diet.** Did you know that wet food tends to adhere to gums and teeth, more so than dry food? Many pet food makers offer a wide variety of dry pet food designed to improve your pet's dental health. (Most can be obtained with a prescription from Campus Veterinary Clinic, if necessary).
- **Knowledge is Power.** The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) estimates that more than 80% percent of dogs and 70% of cats have oral disease by the time they're 3 years old! Keep this in mind as your pet's birthday comes around. Sometimes, the most effective form of problem solving comes with simply being aware of what *could* happen before it does.

Take a look at the next page for a list of helpful pet products that you can incorporate into the fight against animal tooth decay! Every product on the list comes with a recommendation from the Veterinary Oral Health Council, and most can be purchased right here at Campus Veterinary Clinic or from our website [campusveterinary.com](http://campusveterinary.com).

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# Dental Products: Pet Tested, Veterinarian Approved



Royal Canin  
Dental Diet

Campus Veterinary Clinic offers a wide variety of products designed to improve the quality of your pet's dental health. Some of the more effective methods include scheduling an annual dental cleaning in combination with daily brushing and dietary additives like Royal Canin's K9 or Feline Dental Diet. Wet animal food is less abrasive and can sometimes cause a thicker buildup of plaque and tartar. Dental Diet' is larger and more dense than standard pet food. This promotes the more "friction" with each bite. The friction provided by the large kibble size shakes free the plaque and tartar.



C.E.T.  
Toothbrush  
Kit

Chew toys and raw hide strips also aid in maintaining good dental hygiene for the same reason: friction. Plaque in its beginning stages can be easily shaken free from your pet's teeth during the act of chewing so consider adding "Greenies" or C.E.T. Dental Chews to your pet's daily regimen. Look for products that have been given the stamp of approval from the Veterinary Oral Health Council. Many can provide noticeable improvements after a regular period of use.

Brushing your kitty's teeth can be a bit overwhelming at first, but once a routine is established, brushing can be a breeze! Begin with getting your cat used to you putting things in her mouth. Coax her with a finger dipped in chicken broth (or flavored toothpaste) and gradually move towards exploring her mouth. Make it feel like a "treat" so that your cat will feel like she's being rewarded and praised. The goal is to incrementally increase her comfort level, so after she becomes acquainted with your finger you can move on to gauze (also dipped in chicken broth or toothpaste). As she becomes more comfortable with the various textures, you can begin to implement the usage of a toothbrush or a dental sponge. Her comfort with these materials is essential, so take your time and don't feel discouraged if it takes multiple, regular attempts to help her become at ease with the cleaning process.



C.E.T.  
Dental Chews

Next, you may add some tasty poultry or fish flavored toothpaste. Campus Veterinary Clinic recommends the use of a C.E.T. toothbrush kit, in which the toothbrush and toothpaste are bundled together. Get her used to the consistency and flavor of the toothpaste by letting her lick it from your paws. Try applying some directly onto her gum line and then providing praise for her cooperation. Keep this tone of praise as you begin to brush her teeth. At first you may just want to brush one or both of the upper canines (the large front teeth) since they're the most accessible and can provide some easy practice. Again, your cat's acceptance in the brushing process is essential, so work with patience and give as much praise as you can... over time you'll have a kitty with fresh breath and a charming smile. Good luck and visit our website for more information on oral rinses and water additives designed to keep your pet's mouth healthy and pain-free.

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# Kitties and Kiddos

*Children at home? The benefits of having pets at home has proven to be widely beneficial in helping to establish good principles in the lives of our little ones. Some of these benefits can be seen in both a psychological and physical ways.*

Did you know that having a pet improves a child's role-taking skills? Pet ownership allows them to put themselves in a pet's position — they try to *feel* how the pet feels. This quality transfers into the way they approach treating other children. Qualities like empathy, sharing, cooperation, and the ability to recognize the unspoken, non-verbal needs of others are all heightened with an early childhood accented with pet ownership. Think of how invaluable self-awareness is; to have that quality fostered through the joys of caring for an animal is truly *priceless*.

A recent study by Oregon State University monitored the growth of children who were allowed to care for puppies at their preschool. The findings showed that of the children who instinctually took ownership of the pup (many of whom also had pets at home) a majority proved to be more socially competent: They were more popular and had a strong sense of presence and self-esteem. They felt better about themselves. They were able to better understand the feelings of the other children around them. As children grow, other emotional benefits of pet ownership begin to show themselves. Pets help to quell loneliness and fight depression. The daily tasks involved with good ownership helps to create habits conducive to responsibility and accountability, and best of all, as opposed to a list of drab, dry chores (like washing the dishes or taking out the trash), most children feel *compelled* to care and become responsible for their pet out of love and respect for their bond. This sort of internal motivation helps those early life lessons to truly resonate and stick throughout life.

Let's face it as children grow older they begin to experience the stresses of life, if only on an adolescent scale. Regardless of the magnitude of the stress that they're experiencing, the feeling of stress becomes a very real thing. Pet ownership helps to combat that stress, sometimes, in a very direct and immediate way. Dotting, petting, and grooming an animal can be a comfort to both the child and the animal. When you connect to an animal *oxytocin*, the hormone related to stress and anxiety relief, is released, helping to reduce blood pressure and lower cortisol levels.

In addition to these emotional benefits to pet ownership there are some stark physical responses that make keeping a pet at home totally worth it. First and foremost, pets get you outside, they get you moving, and they help to promote the habits of a physically active lifestyle. Sun and fresh air can elevate your mood, and the extra exposure to vitamin D helps to fight physical conditions including cancer, obesity, and heart attacks.



A recent study by the University of Madison in Wisconsin suggests that kids growing up in a home with "furred animals" — whether it's a cat or dog, or on a farm with exposure to large animals — will have less risk of allergies and asthma. "The old thinking was that if your family had a pet, the children were more likely to become allergic to the pet. And if you came from an allergy-prone family, pets should be avoided," says researcher James E. Gern, MD, a pediatrician at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. His research, though, has proven otherwise.

Gern analyzed the blood of babies immediately after birth and one year later. He was looking for evidence of an allergic reaction, immunity changes, and for reactions to bacteria in the environment. If a dog lived in the home, infants were less likely to show evidence of pet allergies — 19% vs. 33%. They were also less likely to develop eczema, a common allergy skin condition that causes red patches and itching. In addition, they had higher levels of certain immune system chemicals, a sign of strength.

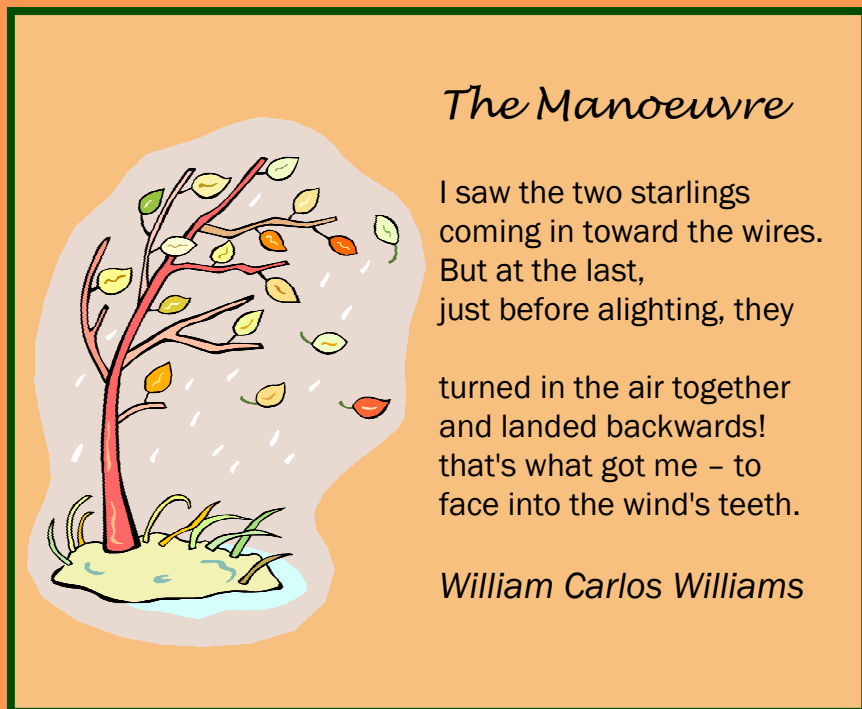
These physical effects don't end in early childhood, though, as dog ownership has shown to help people who suffer from Alzheimer's disease by reducing the severity of anxious outbursts. Pets help to lower blood pressure readings in stressful situations, even heart attack patients who have pets survive longer than those without pets. Male pet owners have less sign of heart disease, lower triglycerides and cholesterol levels than non-pet owners. So the lesson here is simple: **get your kid a pet, chances are, you'll both be better off for it in the long run!**

**Is your pet on a medication regiment?**  
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Explore our web pharmacy  
powered by:



# Campus Veterinary Clinic



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## Office Hours:

### Monday - Friday

7:20 a.m. - 6 p.m.

### Saturday

7:20 a.m. - 3 p.m.

### Sunday

Closed

For tips, news and events, check us out  
on the web!



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tips for the savvy  
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