



Community Veterinary Services Newsletter

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Special points of interest:

- Dental care is an important part of preventive medicine
- At home dental care can prevent disease
- Did you just get a new pet for the holidays?
- We have some tips for new pet owners

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Why do a “dental”? By Julie Grisham

When your new pet made it home, you may not have been thinking about the dental cleanings he or she will need. When you look at that new, adorable pooch’s eyes, these things probably didn’t cross your mind: gingivitis, bad breath, tooth loss, mouth pain, or other diseases.

You might wonder, “Why does my pet need a dental, Doc? I’ve got other bills to pay, and her teeth look fine.” There’s sometimes a consensus that pet dentals are money wasted, but the truth is that clean teeth go hand-in-hand with good health, and good health will save your money long term.

Typically, people don’t think about what’s not

seen, and you may not look inside your pet’s mouth often. Dental cleanings address tartar, plaque, and reddened gums. Tartar and plaque are hiding places for bacteria. When pets bite down on food or toys, bacteria hop into their gums’ tiny blood vessels, and can stop in the heart, kidneys or other places.

It’s logical to understand good dental care is preventive medicine which overall saves money and is often life-saving. Preventive medicine is good for pets and good for your wallet.



80% of dogs over 3 years of age have dental disease

“Chews-ing” Right! By Anne Elise Hertl

Choosing the right dog toy for your dog can be a daunting task, but here are a couple of helpful hints to go by.

#1) The dog toy should not be too hard or too soft. If you can’t indent

the dog toy with your thumb, then it is too hard. If your dog chews a toy to pieces, then it is too soft. Finding the right balance is key.

#2) The dog toy needs to be the right size. If the

dog toy is too small, then it is a choking hazard. For a recommendation, the KONG dog toy is always a good place to start. They are very durable, and you can even hide yummy treats in them. Happy chewing!

Learning Responsibility By Rachel Holman

Bringing home a new pet for Christmas, whether it be a puppy, kitten, gerbil, or bearded dragon, is an exciting time for any family, and especially for the kids. Their shrieks of joy alone can be incentive enough for parents to seek out a new pet for the family, but there is the added benefit of how new pets can teach kids lessons in responsibility.

One such way is to put them in charge of feeding. This teaches kids how to stick to a schedule and be accountable for something or someone other than themselves. Play time and exercise are also invaluable tools to not only teach kids accountability, but also get them out-

side on a daily basis. Personal care and hygiene can also be implemented into a daily regimen for pet care. Having kids brush out the dog's fur or give the bearded dragon a bath not only teaches kids care giving skills, but also reminds them of the importance for their own personal hygiene.

These are just a few examples of the many ways a new pet can help teach everyone in the family new lessons in responsibility. Any child, from 3 to 18 years old, can learn invaluable life skills from helping to take care of another living being.

"...Teaches kids how to stick to a schedule and be accountable..."

Daily Dental Care By Jaime Rutter

At-home dental care for your pets may seem daunting; however, it only takes a few easy steps. Just like humans, the gold standard for pet dental care is toothbrushing daily. A soft-bristled toothbrush or gauze wrapped around your finger with pet-friendly toothpaste are all you need. Using a 45-degree angle to your pet's mouth, move the tooth-

brush or your finger in a circular motion over each tooth. You may need to move your pet's lips to reach the back of the mouth. To finish brushing, use a downward motion over every tooth to rid of the remaining tartar. While this process will take some practice, you and your pet will perfect the process in no time.



These are a few tools you might find helpful.

Dental Treats By Madison Jarrell

While dogs are adjusting to the toothbrushing process, dental hygiene alternatives are available. Dogs will often tolerate dental health diets, chews, and treats that act to delay the formation of plaque and tartar. Plaque can be reduced by up to 70% based solely on the mechanical aspects of mastication.

Dental diets utilize this process by creating large porous kibble that when bitten resists crumbling therefore, essentially scrubbing the teeth as the animal eats. These diets may also include the substance polyphosphate. Polyphosphate coats the surface of the animal's teeth, preventing plaque mineralization.

Additional anti-plaque options include oral gels, sprays, wipes, and water additives. These products often include antimicrobial components that act on all surfaces of the teeth. The Veterinary Oral Health Council offers a more comprehensive list of accepted dental care products.

Starting Your Kitten Off Right By Emily Lloyd and Jeremy Long

Bringing home a kitten is very exciting to a household, especially on Christmas! Raising a kitten is much different than an adult cat: kittens have more curiosity and energy. It is important that you have made your home "kitten" proof by limiting things your new companion can get into. It is also recommended to have a room, or a fenced off area. In this space put a litter box, food, water, bedding and toys.

If you already have an adult cat in your home, please introduce your new kitten to them slowly. Acclimating them to one another over several weeks will be your best route to success. During the first

week, allow them to smell one another through a door and on your clothing. If that goes well, gradually introduce them to one another in a controlled setting, such as having one cat in a carrier, so they can be safely removed if needed. Once your cat is comfortable with these interactions you can slowly start allowing them to be in the same room with supervision. With a slow introduction and proper safety measures in place your new kitten will become a member of the family in now time!



A new kitten is a curious investigator.

A Puppy Proof Place By Kiley Walker

Puppies are very energetic and curious and can get into trouble easily. There are a few easy ways you can puppy proof your new home to make a safe environment for your new pet. Puppies will chew on almost anything. Make sure cords are not within reach or are covered with cord concealers, any small objects that your puppy could consume are high up out of the puppy's reach,

cleaning products and medications are put away with child proof locks, and anything valuable is put up high out of the puppy's reach. Pups will also be going through potty training and will probably have some accidents inside. Confine them on flooring that is easy to clean such as such as linoleum, tile, or wood. To puppy proof the outdoors, it is best to have a fenced in yard

with a secure fence. Be sure the yard is free of toxic plants, pesticides, fertilizers, and other hazards.

"Puppies will chew on almost anything."

Treats: Tasty or Toxic? By Matthew Garrett

Stocking stuffers are a must during the holidays, and they're never complete without some candy. Everybody loves chocolate, right? One of the most common household toxic items for a puppy include some popular food items like chocolate. Chocolate toxicity is dependent on the amount that is consumed as well as

the type of chocolate consumed. For example, a dark or bakers chocolate has higher concentration of the toxic component than a milk chocolate. Thus, dark chocolate is more dangerous to a puppy in smaller amounts. Be mindful of the whereabouts of the holiday treasures including the new puppy.



Many foods safe for humans may be dangerous to our pets.

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MSU-CVM's Community Veterinary Services (CVS) provides third and fourth year DVM students private practice experience. CVS equips students with the skills required to excel within a high-quality small animal private practice.



Left to Right, Back: Julie Grisham, Will Crosby, Madison Jarrell, Rachel Holman, Matthew Garret; Front: Jaime Rutter, Skyler Hensarling, Kiley Walker, Emily Lloyd.

Not pictured: Anne Elise Hertl, Jeremy Long, Jessica Saunders

Puppy School Time By Skyler Hensarling and Jessica Saunders

If the thought of training your new puppy feels daunting, your local veterinarian can be a wonderful resource to get you through those puppy blues! Positive training methods allow you to build a relationship with your pet based on trust while preventing undesirable habits, which often come from normal canine behavior! There are several helpful behaviors such as socialization, crate and mat training, leash walking, and various exercise activities that can make veterinary visits and play time more enjoyable for you and your pet. Socializing puppies prior to fourteen weeks of age is important in creating positive experiences with new people, places, and other pets. Crate training is also a useful tool for housetraining, as well as preparing your pet for travel, severe weather, or other

stressful events in life. With extra time and patience, you have the potential to help your companion become a more confident and comfortable pet and patient. If you find yourself looking for tips or suggestions on socialization groups, finding a trainer or training classes, or behavioral assistance, please reach out to your local veterinarian!



Resources for further information:

- www.Ultimatepuppy.com
- Decoding Your Dog – American College of Veterinary Behaviorists
- Behavior Tips: Crate Training – American College of Veterinary Behaviorists : www.dacbv.org
- Perfect Puppy in Seven Days: How to Start Your Puppy Off Right – Sophia Yin