Periodic disease is a multifactorial infection that can create or exacerbate many negative local and systemic effects.

In addition, there is a very wide variety of pathologies that are encountered within the oral cavity. These conditions often cause significant pain and/or localised, regional and systemic infection. Since oral health is critical for all other body systems including the other vital assessments (nutrition, pain, etc) it should be evaluated during every examination in each patient.

**Dental, oral, and maxillofacial diseases are the most common clinical problems in small animal veterinary practices.**

**Oral disease has numerous local, regional and systemic ramifications.**

**Local consequences**

- **Abscesses**
- **Mandibular pathologic fracture**
- **Ocular damage/eye loss**
- **Increased incidence of oral cancer**
- **Oronasal fistula**

*Most of these local consequences may further decrease eating.*

**Systemic diseases which may be exacerbated**

- **Renal disease**
- **Hepatic disease**
- **Cardiac disease**
- **Increased inflammatory markers**

*Additional possibilities inferred from human research*

- **Increased incidence of certain cancers**
- **Increased incidence and complications of diabetes mellitus**
- **Early mortality**

All of the above factors demonstrate that oral/dental health is critical to not only the overall patient health, but also quality of life.

### Questions & Answers

1. **Why is oral health so important?**
   - Oral diseases are the most common problems in pets, affecting their overall health and decreasing their quality of life.

2. **When should a pet’s oral health be assessed?**
   - Your vet should receive a dental examination at every visit.

3. **And if there’s a problem?**
   - Your pet will diagnose the problem by providing a thorough examination including radiography. Once diagnosed, a safe and reasonable treatment plan will be established.

4. **What is the major purpose of dental treatment?**
   - Your pet’s treatment plan will focus on pain management and infection control.

5. **How not to miss dental pathology?**
   - Every patient at every visit should receive a dental examination.

6. **What is the major purpose of dental treatment?**
   - Pain management and infection control.

### Oral health impacts general health

- For a long time it was thought that bacteria was the primary factor that linked periodontal disease to other infections in the body.

- More recent research demonstrates that inflammation is significant and may link periodontal disease to other chronic conditions too, such as diabetes and heart disease.

- Therefore, treating inflammation as well as bacteria may not only help manage periodontal diseases, but may also help with the management of other chronic inflammatory conditions.

- Furthermore, pets with painful teeth/mouth may experience partial to complete anorexia. They may also not chew properly which is known to decrease proper digestion and assimilation of nutrients regardless of a proper diet.

*As you can see, poor oral health can have significant negative effects both within the oral cavity and systemically as well.*

*Talk to your vet about a complete oral exam.*

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**References**


