



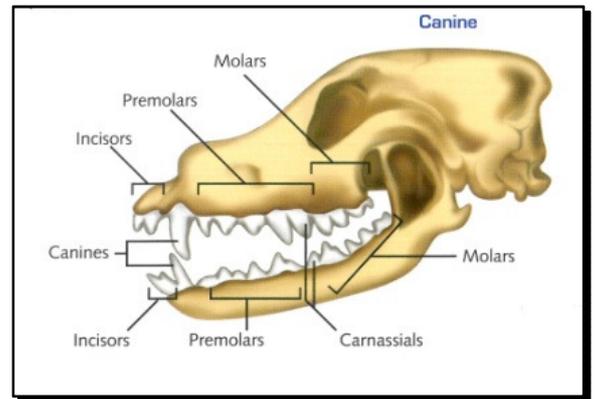
DENTAL CARE FOR YOUR PET GREYHOUND

Just like humans, good dental care in dogs is necessary for good health.

Puppies have 28 deciduous teeth which fall out at about 6 months of age and are replaced by 42 adult permanent adult teeth. Between 60% and 80% of dogs show signs of dental disease by the age of three.

When a dog's teeth are not properly maintained, the bacteria present in

the mouth causes an invisible coating called plaque which if left, thickens and hardens to become tartar or calculus. This causes inflammation of the gums, a condition called gingivitis. If left untreated this can progress to periodontal disease which causes the gums to become infected and shrink away from the teeth exposing sensitive unprotected tooth surfaces. As the gums continue to recede, the tooth socket can become infected and the tooth lost.



Symptoms of periodontal disease include:

- Bad breath.
- Red and inflamed gums.
- Yellow or brown crust along gum line.
- Loose or missing teeth.
- Possible decrease in appetite and subsequent weight loss due to difficulty chewing.

Most dogs show few outward signs until the condition has progressed substantially, often causing discomfort or pain. Advanced periodontal disease can result in bacteria being absorbed into the blood stream which can then be carried to other organs. Heart, kidneys and liver conditions are often caused by bad dental health.

Racing Greyhounds

The diet of racing Greyhounds usually includes raw meat and softened kibble. In some racing kennel environments it is not appropriate to provide dogs with bones to chew as this can lead to aggression and fights. Therefore, this allows little opportunity for the dogs to clean their teeth through means of diet. Often after retirement and upon being re-homed into pet life, this will be the first time many Greyhounds dental health is fully addressed. You may need to teach your pet about bones or chewable dry food if this is something they were unaccustomed to in racing life.

● *Healthy teeth and gums:*

Minimal plaque and tartar on the tooth surface.



● *Gingivitis:*

Plaque, tartar and mild bad breath.



● *Early Periodontal disease:*

Inflammation, swelling and moderate bad breath.



● *Established periodontal disease:*

Pustular discharge, bleeding and severe bad breath.



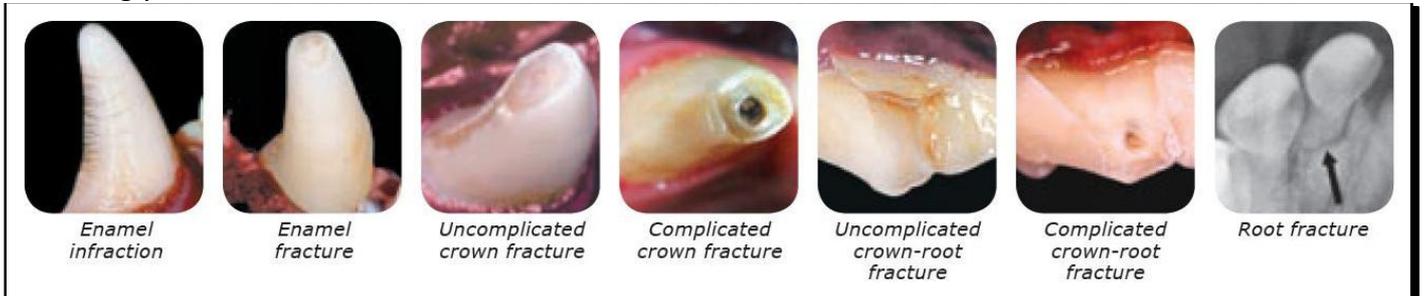
● *Advanced periodontal disease:*

Bleeding gums, mobile teeth and severe bad breath.



Other Tooth Damage

Dogs love to chew but they can often break their teeth by chewing on the wrong things. Tooth fractures are often caused by the dog chewing on hard or broken toys, fences, kennel or cage doors and inappropriate treats. Always inspect toys and treats before giving them to your dog. Consistent fence or cage chewing may be the result of an underlying behavioural problem and should be addressed accordingly.



Treatment for Periodontal Disease

If your Greyhound is suffering with advanced periodontal disease, it will require a visit to the veterinarian where the dog will be required to go under a general anaesthetic for the procedure. The vet will use picks, ultrasonic scalers and various other tools to scrape the tartar from the dog's teeth above and below the gum line. They will deal with any diseased soft tissue and extract any damaged teeth as they progress and finish the procedure off with a thorough clean and polish. Your dog will probably be required to take a course of antibiotics after the procedure to prevent any infections.

Here is a photo showing a Greyhound before and after his dental procedure carried out by a vet.

Maintenance and Prevention

Your Greyhound will require your assistance on a daily basis in order for it to maintain healthy teeth and gums and prevent dental problems. There are several ways in which you can do this.

- **Brushing**

This is best done with dogs that have been used to it from puppyhood but if your adult dog allows you to brush its teeth, you will need to do so on a daily basis for it to be effective. Special dog toothbrushes (including ones that you put on your finger) are available from pet supply stores along with toothpaste, usually in dog friendly flavours such as meat or cheese. (Human toothpaste is not suitable for dogs.)



- **Diet**

Many brands of premium dog foods have oral care products in their range of dry kibble. They generally work in three ways;

1. Mechanical abrasion where the shape, size and texture of the kibble scrapes plaque from the teeth as it is chewed.
2. The kibble is coated with special ingredients that inhibit plaque.
3. The product contains ingredients to promote fresh breath.



- **Dental Treats**

There are a variety of dog treats on the market designed for your pet to enjoy chewing whilst cleaning their teeth. The shape, texture and ingredients promote mechanical abrasion to remove plaque, massage the gums and promote fresh breath. It is important that you always choose the appropriate sized treat for your dog as anything too small could be swallowed whole and become lodged in the throat.



- **Chew Toys**

Chew toys can satisfy your dog's natural desire to chew whilst cleaning teeth and massaging the gums. In addition they can reduce their stress levels and relieve boredom. There is a huge range available made from rubber, nylon or rawhide. Always choose the appropriate sized toy for your dog and regularly check for any damage that indicates the toy should be thrown out.

- **Bones**

Giving your Greyhound a fresh meaty bone once a week will give your dog hours of enjoyment and allow it to clean its teeth in a natural way. Be choosy about the type of bones you provide. Brisket bones contain a lot of cartilage so are too soft to provide the desired teeth cleaning action. Bones that are too small could be swallowed whole and become lodged in the throat (and also cause problems at the other end!) Large beef leg bones (whole or cut in half) are excellent and your dog will enjoy gnawing to get to the marrow. **Never feed your dog cooked bones!** Some dogs will turn up their noses at a fresh bone and prefer to bury them for a few days before consuming. If you have more than one dog, always be mindful of the potential for aggression and fights caused by this high value treat and be prepared to supervise or separate your dogs if necessary.



- **Regular Vet Checks**

As part of your annual health check, your vet will give your dog an oral exam. If your dog is co-operative, they may be able to give the teeth a quick scale (scrape away the tartar) without the need for a more invasive procedure. The vet will obviously advise you of any issues or other treatment required.

Make your Greyhound's dental health a priority.