

## DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

February marks National Pet Dental Health Month. Dental disease is one of the most common disease treated in pets, and can include a number of conditions such as gingivitis, periodontal disease and teeth fracture(s) to name a few. Luckily, many conditions of the mouth are treatable with timely intervention. However, it can be difficult to identify when your pet is having mouth pain or other discomfort. In preparation for February, and as a reminder year round, it is important to keep in mind some signs to watch for at home that may indicate something is wrong with your pet's mouth.

One of the most easily identifiable signs is bad breath. There is a normal bacterial population that lives in the mouth, however pets with dental disease can have significantly more. The result of this over growth is a metabolic process that leads to the creation of an odor. This bacterial process, more importantly, can lead to significant gum disease that over time can cause loose teeth.

Other more subtle signs include excessive drooling, chewing on one side, dropping food, a change in food preference and for cats in particular, failure to groom.

Unfortunately, the most common sign is no sign(s) at all. The good news is, an evaluation by your veterinarian can identify if their mouth is a cause of discomfort and evaluate whether your pet is a candidate for a dental procedure done at their office, or in some cases, at a dental specialist. If you have any questions or concerns about your pet's mouth, do not hesitate to contact your veterinary office to set up an appointment.