

# CONTACT DETAILS

**After-Hours Clinic: 021 91 911 91**

## **Bellville:**

1 Kontiki Road  
Glen Ive  
021 91 911 91

## **Durbanville:**

16 Plein Street  
021 976 3015

## **Sonstraal:**

10 Verdi Boulevard  
Sonstraal Heights  
021 975 1870

## **Kenridge:**

78 De Bron Avenue  
021 914 0886

## **Goodwood:**

107 Vasco Boulevard  
021 591 2571

## **Parow:**

20 Frans Conradie Dr  
021 939 7102

*Visit any one of our six branches.  
Make use of our after-hours emergency facilities  
at 1 Kontiki Road, Bellville or visit our website at  
[www.tah.co.za](http://www.tah.co.za)*



THE IMPORTANCE OF  
**DENTAL  
HYGIENE**

# LOOKING OUT FOR DENTAL DISEASE

*Dental disease is one of the most commonly detected problems at Tygerberg Animal Hospital. The consequences of poor dental health go way beyond bad breath. Despite this, it remains an unrecognised disease amongst pet owners.*

Periodontal infection is also associated with serious health concerns. These range from tooth loss to bacterial infection of the heart, liver, and possibly kidneys. Read on to learn more about this silent problem, and what you can do to keep your best friend's pearlys as white as we would all like them to be.

"MOM, MARLEY HAS DOGGY BREATH!"

Every day, just like with humans, plaque accumulates on the surface of your pet's teeth. Plaque is the sticky, colourless film of bacteria and sugars that constantly form on teeth. It can harden into tartar if not removed, typically causing gingivitis (inflammation of the gums). Gingivitis is reversible if treated in time. If left untreated it can lead to periodontal disease, or periodontitis – the inflammation of the periodontal tissue below the gum.

Periodontitis causes a lot of pain and can lead to abscesses and possibly even tooth loss. If the infection is not treated bacteria may get lodged in the bloodstream and affect organs such as the heart and kidneys.



Symptoms of dental problems in your pet can include bad breath or a change in eating habits; perhaps they chew food only on one side of the mouth; you may notice that your pet drops food or that they seem to be in pain when chewing; excessive drooling may also be seen; or your pet may not want to chew their usual toys and may rub their face on the ground or paw at their face because of the pain.

*For further advice, speak to any of your TAH vets – they will be more than happy to answer your dental questions.*

## TIPS ON HOME DENTAL CARE



Keeping your pet's teeth strong and healthy will positively influence general health. This is why we have listed some simple tips for home dental care and pet tooth brushing:

### Tip #1: Annual dental appointments

Schedule annual appointments with your veterinarian for a dental check-up, especially as your pet gets older. This ensures that a professional pet dental technician cleans all those spots you may miss. They also know what to look for thus ensuring the prevention of any dental problems that may progress.

### Tip #2: Brush regularly

Brushing your pet's teeth regular is the best thing you can do to promote healthy oral hygiene. It will also allow you to detect problems such as plaque at an early stage. Plaque can build up on the teeth within 24 to 36 hours.

### Tip #3: Use other dental aids

Give your pet rubber chew toys and specific dental kibbles to further improve their dental health. Ensure your pet eats the correct diet and avoids human foods especially sugars that cause severe dental decay.

### Tip #4: Use a toothbrush

Use a soft bristled human toothbrush or a specially designed pet toothbrush.

### Tip #5: Use a pet toothpaste

Either use a specific pet toothpaste or none at all. Never use human toothpaste as it can make your pet ill.

### Tip #6: Start at an early age

Start brushing your pet's teeth from the age of 8–12 weeks. When they start losing their baby teeth brushing may become painful, but you can continue once all permanent teeth are visible.

Following a consistent home care program will safeguard your pet's dental health, result in efficient problem solving and less tooth loss. Work with your vet to ensure a long and healthy life for your pet.