

Greyhound Fact Sheet

Frequently Asked Questions - Greyhound Oral Health

1. Why is maintaining good oral health so important?

Bad oral health is one of the most common diseases diagnosed in dogs. The number one reason for bad oral health is due to the lack of routine dental care for controlling plaque and tartar.

Bad oral health has greater energy demand, causes discomfort or pain and may lower the greyhound's performance if severe enough.

2. What is bad oral health?

Bad oral health or periodontal disease is the destruction of bone, gum tissue and the surrounding structures that hold the teeth in place. A similar process in humans, it involves bacterial infection that spreads below the gumline, and destroys the bone holding the tooth root leading to a mobile, inflamed, pus-filled and painful tooth.

3. What are the early signs of bad oral health on my greyhound?

Some early signs of bad oral health include:

- Tooth discolouration
- The appearance of mild dental tartar or plaque on teeth
- Bad breath
- Mildly red or swollen gums

If you notice any or a combination of these early signs of bad oral health, then you could introduce the following as part of daily routine care:

- Specific dental dry kibble (not moistened)
- Dental chews
- Chew toys
- Chlorhexidine oral rinse and gel
- Tooth brushing

4. When should I refer to a veterinarian?

You should always seek veterinary attention if you see one or more of the following signs:

- Lack of appetite or not wanting to drink
- Reluctant to play with or chew toys (if previously would)
- Dropping food from mouth
- Bad breath
- Drooling
- Red, bleeding or swollen gums
- Pawing or rubbing at face regularly
- Reluctant or pulls away when you attempt to touch near mouth/face
- "Chattering" teeth
- Swelling under the eye (this may be a tooth root abscess)
- A discoloured or broken tooth
- Appearance of moderate to severe dental tartar or plaque

5. Would my greyhound be in pain?

Yes, there would be pain experienced with bad oral health. The degree of pain is dependent upon the number of teeth affected, the severity of the disease and length of time of the disease.

Pain is the unpleasant sensation or experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage. Pain from cuts usually develops within an hour of the injury. Pain can occur as a direct result of a chipped or broken tooth or from inflammation of the gums. While there may be variable degrees of pain depending on the severity of the disease, it is nonetheless unnecessary pain and discomfort for the greyhound. If the greyhound expresses pain or discomfort, then it is strongly recommended to refer to your veterinarian.

6. Why does my greyhound need to have his/her teeth cleaned under a general anaesthetic?

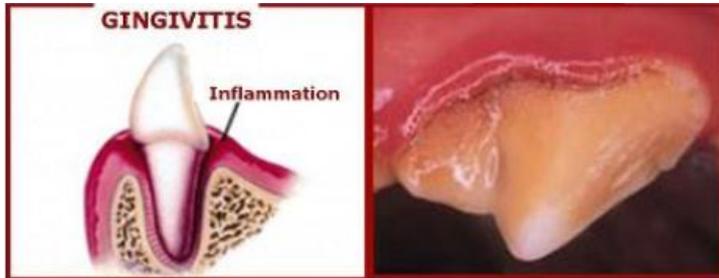
A dental procedure under a general anaesthetic will ensure that your veterinarian will be able to thoroughly examine the entire mouth to identify any loose or broken tooth, stage of periodontal disease, dead tooth or infected tooth. Your veterinarian will then be able to provide appropriate treatment for any abnormality which includes either extraction, medication or a salvage procedure.

A professional scale and polish of the tooth above and below the gumline will be possible unlike anaesthesia-free dentistry, which only scrapes off plaque above the gumline, thereby leaving bacteria to continue to destroy the bone around the tooth root.

We would encourage you to talk to your veterinarian about any concerns with undergoing a general anaesthetic and/or a dental procedure. For example, if you are concerned about the possible effects of general anaesthetic on your older greyhound, then it may be worthwhile to undergo a blood test beforehand to identify if there are any increased risks.

Greyhound dental disease score chart

Stage 1



- Margin of attached gingiva (gum) is inflamed and swollen
- Plaque covering teeth

Treatment can reverse condition. Seek veterinary advise for management options.

Stage 2



- Entire attached gingiva is inflamed and swollen
- Mouth is painful and odour begins to noticeable

Professional treatment and dental care can prevent this from becoming irreversible. Seek veterinary advise for treatment.

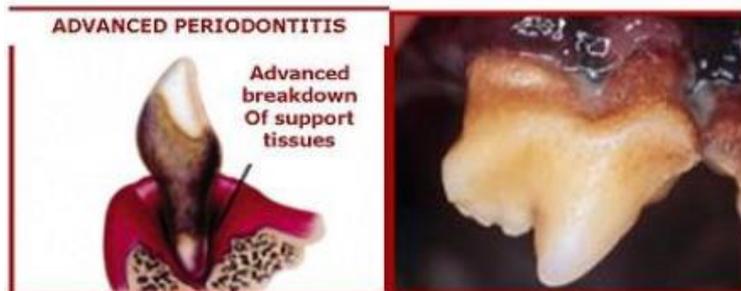
Stage 3



- Cherry red and bleeding gingiva
- Attached gingiva is being destroyed by infection and calculus (tartar)
- Sore mouth affects eating and behavior
- Bad breath is present

This is the beginning of periodontal disease and this may be irreversible. Seek veterinary advise for treatment.

Stage 4



- Chronic bacterial infection is destroying the gingiva, tooth and jaw bone
- Bacterial may be spreading throughout the entire body via the bloodstream and may damage the kidneys, liver & heart

This is the chronic periodontal disease and this may be irreversible. Seek veterinary advise for treatment.