

## Smelly breath is what we notice, but your pet could be suffering more than it appears.

Most dogs and cats aren't eating what their ancestors did, and the result is often dental disease. In addition, a lot of dog breeds have shorter head shapes with crowded teeth so that even an ideal diet doesn't help prevent dental problems.

Dogs and cats don't talk about having a sore mouth. In fact the desire to eat is so strong that only a very observant owner would notice a problem - apart from the smell. That stinky breath smell is usually from rotten meat trapped between teeth, decaying gums, blood and pus. Not nice for anyone, especially a pet that gives us so much love.

There is a simple solution, although it does involve a day at the vet. For older pets, or ones with health concerns, some preliminary blood tests and health assessments are usually preformed. Once the all clear is given, a suitable day is scheduled.

The day usually involves skipping breakfast (fluids are Ok), and into the vet for an admission examination. A premedication injection to settle the nerves is given and the pet is then admitted to a warm bed to get a bit sleepy.

Dogs and cats don't sit in the dentist chair with their mouth open very readily, so an intravenous drip is commenced and a light plane of general anaesthesia is induced.

All the teeth are examined and any missing teeth are recorded. A photograph is taken of the mouth and each tooth is assessed. If loose, infected or the gum has receded too much, that tooth is removed. Remaining teeth have all calculus and tartar ultrasonically scaled off, the tooth polished using a polishing paste, and the teeth and gums rinsed with an antibacterial solution.

Pain relief in the form of local anaesthetic injections and systemic anti-inflammatories are given, and antibiotics may be commenced as well.

A final photograph of the cleaned teeth is taken and the patient is allowed to quietly recover back in their warm bed.