

PERIODONTAL DISEASE IN GREYHOUNDS

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Periodontal disease in greyhounds is very common & a serious health risk which affects their quality of life. Some theories as to why it is so prevalent in retired racers include a) greyhounds are genetically more susceptible, b) the soft diet & stress during their racing careers contribute & c) lack of dental care during their racing careers. Most greyhounds have received a dental cleaning prior to adoption & will require at least annual dentals in the future performed by a vet. We have a continuing responsibility after adoption to address their ongoing needs.

I can personally testify that DAILY toothbrushing along with prophylactic use of antibiotics works to fight gum disease. I made the commitment to our first greyhound, Dilly, to brush her teeth daily once I finally realized that it was a tremendous health risk to her to have advanced periodontal disease. She raced until she was almost 5 years old & was diagnosed with advanced periodontal disease at the time of her adoption. She lived to almost 14 and I feel that excellent tooth & gum care have contributed to her ability to avoid kidney disease, heart disease & other diseases associated with periodontal disease. After the age of 8, Dilly was able to avoid semi-annual dentals requiring anesthesia as well as painful extractions for rotten teeth, abscessed & infected gums all of which were tremendously affecting her quality of life.

I followed a dental care program for Dilly prescribed by a prominent animal dentist in Northern Virginia. Dilly was 8 years old and had 5 teeth extracted when I became alarmed and consulted with the dentist. If your dog has exposed roots, loose teeth, abscessed gums & teeth, etc... some teeth will probably have to be extracted first to ease their pain and to "halt" what irreversible damage has been done. You can then focus on saving the remaining teeth and gums with the regimen as prescribed by Dilly's animal dentist as well as your vet. Please feel free to share this article.

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DENTAL CARE ROUTINE

1. Brush teeth & gums daily with two different applications: 1st) CET Paste on all teeth & gums focusing on rear teeth, followed by... 2nd) CHX Rinse Solution on the toothbrush applied liberally to the gum line or squirted along the gum line. I use a small toothbrush like what is used for cats & brush when she is laying down resting and very relaxed just before bedtime. SLOWLY get your dog used to your hands on their mouth by massaging the lips & gums for several days, then use a gauze pad to rub the gums, then try a toothbrush with toothpaste only when they will trust you in their mouth.

2. Antibiotics given 1st 5 days of each month.

SPECIFIC PRODUCTS & PRESCRIPTION ANTIBIOTICS I USED ON DILLY:

1) The rinse is CHX, 8oz bottle, made by Virbac, 12% chlorhexidine gluconate oral lavage solution for dogs & cats, purchased through vet*.

2) The toothpaste is C.E.T. Enzymatic Toothpaste, Poultry Flavor, 2.5 oz, made by Virbac, purchased through vet*.

3) The antibiotic is Clindamycin, 150mg, give 1 tablet daily for 1st five days of each month. (Our grey is a 60lb female), prescribed by vet.

* An over the counter rinse & paste under the name Petrodex/St. Jon made by Virbac AH is available at Petsmart. Ask your vet about this.

I noticed that at the end of each month Dilly's gums started bleeding while brushing her teeth but they firm up nicely & don't bleed once she had 5 days of antibiotics at the beginning of the next month. Dilly did not require a dental or lose any teeth in the last 4 years of her life. There were no adverse consequences regarding the "prophylactic use" of "pulse antibiotic therapy" the first 5 days of each month. My experience has been that pulse antibiotic therapy is necessary along with daily brushing if your dog has advanced disease. Dilly had some "pockets" along her back gum line where debris collected but daily brushing with paste & CHX solution flush out the debris and the antibiotics kept infection at bay.

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