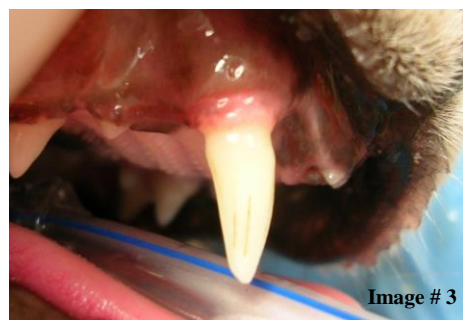


## Periodontal Disease



In image #3 we see the beginning stages of Periodontal Disease. (Gum recession, Redness and swelling = Gingivitis) This tooth is treatable and disease progression can be slowed or even stopped.



Image #4 shows the type of Periodontal Disease that we work to prevent. The cat in this picture had over two-thirds bone loss as diagnosed with dental radiographs. Both of these teeth needed to be extracted. Periodontal Disease is preventable with proper care.

Proper dental cleanings include sound medical treatment in addition to consideration of your cat's overall experience. The cleaning process includes digital dental radiographs, scaling and polishing, a dental sealant, and other treatments all performed under general anesthesia. We use anesthesia because otherwise we would be doing a disservice to your cat. If we were to simply scrape the calculus build-up off the teeth while your cat was still awake it would likely traumatize your cat and easily damage the teeth and gums. Not only would it be traumatic for your cat, medically the destructive disease lies under the gum-line. We have to use anesthesia and an ultrasonic scaler to remove the bacteria and tartar from the unseen areas between the gum and the teeth to stop dental disease.

When we prepare a patient for a dental cleaning the first step is running pre-anesthetic in-house lab work, placing an intravenous catheter, and providing pre-anesthetic (comfort) medications. These medications reduce stress and the amount of anesthetic gas needed during the procedure. We induce anesthesia with a safe medication that again allows us to minimize the anesthetic gas used for the remainder of the cleaning.

During the entire anesthetic event we monitor your cat very closely. We use an electronic monitor to take the following vital signs: Heart Rate, Oxygen saturation of the blood, ECG, Blood Pressure, Respiratory Rate, Capnography (measures the quality of each breath), and Temperature. We provide heat support and IV fluid therapy to help maintain and treat the vital signs. With all of the steps used we minimize the risk of anesthetic complications.

Once the dental radiographs have been taken, the teeth have been scaled and polished, the dental sealant has been applied, and any other treatments like nerve blocks are complete it is time for the post-anesthetic care. While your cat is waking up we provide consistent monitoring, warmth, consistent oxygen therapy, pain medication as needed, and comfort pheromones to be sure that the recovery period is as safe and comfortable as possible. From start to finish your cat's overall well-being and comfort are our primary concern.

**Do dry food diets help with dental disease?**  
Dental disease is most destructive under the gum-line. Dry diets can not scrape that area the way muscle, tissues, bone, and feathers of prey items would. We use dental cleanings to get under the gums for domestic cats.

## A CAT'S VIEW VETERINARY HOSPITAL

### FELINE DENTAL HEALTH



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## Periodontal (Gum) Disease and Cats: What is it, and is my cat at risk?

Periodontal disease (gum disease) is the most common oral disease in cats and humans and can occur at any age. However, the incidence generally increases as cats get older. It occurs when plaque, saliva, minerals, and food debris mineralize on the tooth forming tartar. After 7 days of tartar build-up, calculus forms as a hard crust on the teeth. Over time tartar and calculus push bacteria/ infection further under the gum-line. This causes an inflammatory response which often degrades the supportive structures around the teeth. Brushing your cat's teeth can be next to impossible, but this process progresses everyday your cat's teeth are not brushed. Teeth brushing is also not enough to stop dental disease once tartar and calculus form.

Ultimately, the gums become inflamed (gingivitis) and separate from the teeth. Pockets form (spaces between the teeth and gums) that become infected and eat away at the bone surrounding the roots of the teeth. When this happens bacteria has access to the blood supply and together with the cat's immune response these factors cause periodontal disease. Periodontal disease leads to pain, gum recession, abscesses, bone loss, and potentially systemic disease (heart and kidney disease). Periodontal disease is the most common way for cats and humans to lose their teeth.

## What are Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions?

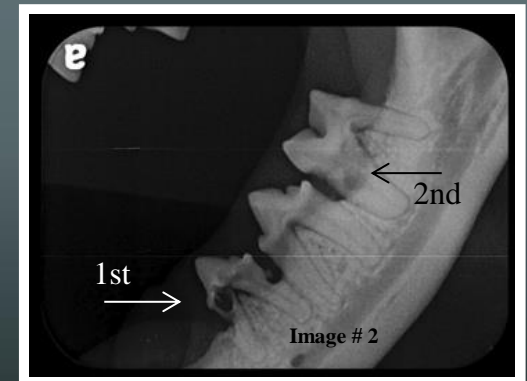
During your cat's yearly physical exam Dr. Nancy Matthews will do an oral exam. If your cat has noticeable calculous build-up or other problems she may recommend a dental cleaning or other treatments. Feline dental health is an aspect of your cat's care that is easy to overlook. However, poor dental health has been linked to heart and kidney disease. Longevity has also been linked to dental health. Good dental health can increase longevity by 3 to 5 years.

FORL's are Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions. Imagine saying that ten times a day. The acronym makes things a lot easier. FORL's are a serious and common problem for cats. FORL's are progressive, painful, erosive, "cavity-like" lesions seen in over 50% of cats over the age of 5. The lesions can attack the crown of the tooth, or form under the gum-line compromising the root. The problem is that FORL's degrade the enamel of the tooth and expose the nerves and blood supply to painful infection. In some cases the entire root of a tooth is attacked leaving the crown or external part of the tooth looking fine. Imagine what it would be like to have the nerves of your teeth exposed and not have the ability to tell someone about it. A recent study showed the incidence to be higher in purebred cats (70%) compared to mixed breed cats (41%).

What causes FORL's? The only answer is that we do not know. While there are several theories the definitive cause has not yet been found. What about treatment? The best answer we have is that regular dental cleaning may help prevent them. However, dental radiographs are the only way to diagnose them. Once a FORL has formed the only treatment is extraction of the tooth. Extraction stops the erosion, the pain, and allows us to treat any infection. Combined with the risk of periodontal disease, cats with a history of FORL's should have yearly dental cleanings and dental radiographs to improve their quality of life.



Image #1 shows three lower teeth that clearly show redness and some swelling. It is not until we radiograph the teeth that we find very painful FORL's. In image #2 notice that the FORL is destroying the crown of the first tooth, but with the second tooth the root is being destroyed.



Because dental care is not always planned please feel free to discuss setting up a payment plan for any needed dental treatment. We believe that treating and preventing your cat's discomfort is the top priority.