

Greyhound Dental Care

Ensuring optimal health and performance by preventing periodontitis



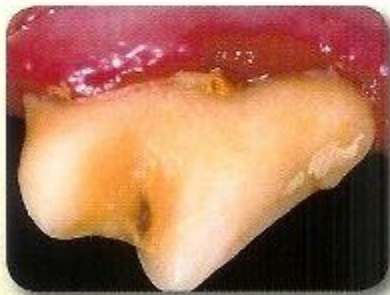
Gingivitis:

Plaque and slightly disagreeable mouth odor.



Early periodontal disease:

Gum inflammation, swelling and bad breath.



Moderate periodontal disease:

Pustular discharge, bleeding and moderate bad breath.



Advanced periodontal disease:

Bleeding gums, mobile teeth and very bad breath.

Picture Credit: <https://www.mycharlottevet.com/my-charlotte-veterinarian-near-me-pet-dental-care.html>

What causes periodontitis?

Periodontitis is common in dogs and can be caused by a lack of dental care which leads to a build-up of plaque on the teeth. The disease starts with bacteria in the mouth which get under the gum line causing inflammation and then cause destruction of the gum tissue, the underlying bony tooth socket and other structures. Severe periodontal disease can result



in dental abscess formation or tooth loss; infection spreading via the bloodstream to the heart, kidneys and other organs as well as ongoing pain, discomfort and poor condition.

The longer plaque stays on the teeth, the more it accumulates and hardens with minerals to form calculus or tartar. This occurs after only 3 days of plaque build-up.

Greyhounds can have a genetic predisposition to periodontitis. This means that in some gene lines, the greyhound's own immune system targets the gum disease and extra immune-mediated inflammation adds to the pain and swelling associated with periodontitis. These dogs have very painful mouths, swollen gums and lips. In some severe cases, extracting all the teeth is the only way to permanently cure this condition.

How do I identify periodontitis?

The first stage is what we see as gum disease or gingivitis. This is *redness* and swelling of the *gums*, they may bleed more easily and often the dog has *smelly breath*. This stage is reversible with dental care.

The second stage is tooth disease or periodontitis which is inflammation of the deeper structures of the teeth and jaw bones. The damage caused by periodontitis is irreversible.

Dogs with normal looking gums may still have some level of deeper periodontitis. It can only be diagnosed by a vet using dental instruments and dental x-rays during general anaesthetic. Unless there is excessive calculus present, it can be difficult to know whether your dog has periodontitis, this makes **routine preventative dental care** so important.

It is wise to seek veterinary advice if your greyhound has/is:

- smelly breath
- red, swollen or bleeding gums
- excessive tartar or calculus
- lack of appetite or not wanting to drink
- reluctant to play with or chew toys (if previously would)
- dropping food from mouth
- pawing or rubbing at face regularly
- reluctant or pulls away when you attempt to touch near mouth/face i.e. when placing or removing a race muzzle
- "chattering" teeth
- swelling under the eye (this may be a tooth root abscess)
- a discoloured or broken tooth



How do I prevent periodontitis?

Routine preventative dental care is the answer. Ask your vet for further advice, especially if signs of periodontitis are present.

Dental care at home includes:

- daily tooth brushing
- use of dental rinses (chlorhexidine rinses and gels are available)
- dental chews
- diet i.e. specific dental dry kibble (not moistened) or large meaty bones

A greyhound's annual veterinary health check should include a thorough dental examination.

Version: March 2022, Review: March 2023