

- Dogs—care

Caring for dogs' oral health

The Manila Times · 28 Jun 2022 · B9

ACCORDING to the American Veterinary Medical Association, four out of five dogs over the age of 3 suffer from dental disease when most owners think their dogs' teeth and gums are perfect. However, veterinarians and pet care experts will readily say otherwise.



According to Dr. Jomar Castro of Consult A Vet Animal Hospital, "This is usually caused by bacteria and we all know that a lot of our dogs don't brush their teeth, unlike humans. Most of the time periodontal disease is not noticed until it is in an advanced stage."

Pet parents should be able to identify the three tell-tale signs that their dogs might be in pain.

Stinky breath.

One of the easiest indicators of oral disease is bad breath.

According to Castro, "Some pet parents believe that bad breath is something pets naturally have. They are often unnoticed and untreated."

When plaque accumulates on dog's teeth, it hardens into tartar. In the long term, it will not only harm the tissues that support the teeth, but it will also cause illness and tooth loss. If left untreated, it can cause heart, kidney, and liver disease in dogs.

Discoloration of teeth and bleeding gums.

"You would notice their teeth have already discolored. The discoloration that happens is a pinch color of yellow to brown, it's no longer pearly white. So that's a major tell tale sign that your dog might have periodontal disease," the expert explained.

In addition with the discoloration of teeth, he noted that dogs can also experience bleeding of gums, "When you push up the upper lip of your dog, you would notice that it is swollen, it sometimes reddish and when they eat, they bleed."

Sudden change in eating habits.

Refusing to eat might be a sign that the dogs are already experiencing pain in their mouth, gums or teeth. If your dog exhibits any of these symptoms, take it to the nearest veterinarian for a check-up.

To prevent dogs getting gum disease, Castro suggested brushing the teeth of dogs at least thrice a week, "Pet parents should integrate tooth brushing into their dog's routine slowly so it gets used to it to avoid serious dental problems."

The expert also recommends pet owners to use tooth care products such as Pedigree Dentastix.

"For the longest time, I have used Pedigree Dentastix. It will keep tartar and plaque buildup at bay. It is also very affordable and easy to administer and is all around as you can buy it easily," Castro finally shared.