

Cats' Dental Care Becoming Priority

Pet-insurance provider reports increase in dental-related claims over the past year.

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In the past, pet owners have often procrastinated or altogether forgotten about the importance of regular oral healthcare and exams because dental problems with cats and dogs are not as obvious as other physical afflictions.

The American Veterinary Dental Society states that 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats show signs of oral disease by age 3. Recently, there has been a rise in the awareness and claims pertaining to pet dental health. Pet-insurance provider PetFirst Healthcare has reported a 179 percent increase in dental-related claims over the past year.

Bad breath, eating habit changes, depression and pawing at the mouth are signs of possible oral disease. Left untreated, plaque and tartar buildup can result in tooth loss, pain and complications with heart, liver and kidneys.

Veterinarians recommend regular teeth cleaning for pets and that owners get in the habit of practicing dental health care at home on a consistent basis. Various pet-insurance policies allow reimbursement for costs related to preventive care.