

February is National Pet Dental Health Month

Animal welfare and veterinary organizations encourage cat and dog owners to be aware of their pets' oral health.

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Proper dental care is essential to a cat's overall health. (Stock photo)Bad breath can signal a health risk in your cat: dental disease. To help increase pet owners' awareness of their animals' oral health, several animal organizations are sponsoring National Pet Dental Health Month throughout February. The American Veterinary Medical Association, American Veterinary Dental Society, Academy of Veterinary Dentistry, American Veterinary Dental College, Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians and Hill's Pet Nutrition urge owners to pay special attention to their pets' teeth and gums.

The American Veterinary Dental Society said that 70 percent of cats show signs of oral disease by the age of 3. Symptoms include bad breath, changes in eating or chewing habits, continual pawing at the face and depression.

"Oral disease is the most frequently diagnosed health problem for pets," said Henry Childers, DVM, past president of the American Veterinary Medical Association. "Just as the public has come to realize that their own oral health is linked to their overall health, veterinarians want people to understand that dental health care is essential to maintaining the overall health and well-being of the family pet."

To help educate pet owners about proper dental care for cats and dogs, Hill's Pet Nutrition will send out 25,000 National Pet Dental Health Month kits to veterinary hospitals around the country. The kits contain educational materials, logo pins, window clings and brochures listing basic tips for pet dental health.

[Click here for more information about National Pet Dental Health Month.](#)

[Click here to learn more about cat dental health and how to brush your cat's teeth.](#)