



O A K B A Y A N I M A L H O S P I T A L

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TARTAR PREVENTION

How does tartar form, and what does it do?

Plaque is a gummy substance that forms on the teeth within a few hours after a meal. Within 24 hours, plaque hardens into tartar.

Tartar is harmful in two ways. First, it serves as a place where bacteria can reside and multiply in the mouth. There is substantial scientific evidence that bacteria from tartar get into the blood stream and are deposited in various organs. Heart and kidney disease often result. Second, tartar builds up at the gum line. As the tartar deposit gets larger, it pushes the gums away from the roots of the teeth. Eventually, the teeth will loosen and fall out.

How can I prevent tartar formation on my dog's teeth?

After your dog's teeth have been cleaned, we would like to recommend a few steps which will help to reduce the process of plaque and tartar buildup.

- 1.** Feed your dog Prescription Diet t/d™. This is a food that has been shown to greatly reduce tartar buildup. It is formulated as a dry food and is composed of large pieces. Because the pieces are too large to be swallowed whole, your dog must chew them. The food contains fibers that literally scrape the plaque off of the teeth without damaging the enamel. By removing plaque as it forms, tartar formation is greatly diminished.
- 2.** Brushing of the teeth is another effective means of removing plaque before it turns into tartar. We recommend the use of a toothpaste made especially for dogs. This needs to be done at least twice weekly (preferably daily), but we know that not all dogs will tolerate it. Special brushes are made that make this task easier.
- 3.** Use a "mouthwash" that is added to your dog's drinking water. This type of product reduces the bacterial count in the mouth, resulting in improved breath.
- 4.** Cleaning the teeth in 6-12 months or at the first sign of tartar buildup can be very beneficial to most dogs. This will prevent damage to the gums and roots.