



Your Cat's Mouth

How teeth & gums can affect overall feline health

How healthy your cat's gums and teeth are can be a barometer for her overall health. Cats can get several oral conditions that can cause them pain (which you will seldom see), as well as affect the health of their kidneys and heart, and cause bad breath.

The primary way veterinarians recommend you keep your cat's mouth healthy is through daily tooth brushing. However, unless it is started early in cat's life, it is often challenging to do this. If your cat simply won't tolerate brushing, water additives are available that can be added to their water and will help keep the bacteria load somewhat suppressed. This is not a permanent substitute for brushing, but in the category of "we do the possible", it has some value.



Among the conditions that can affect your cats' teeth and gums are:

- Gingivitis - Inflammation of the gums
- Periodontal disease - Caused by a build-up of plaque on the teeth, pockets form between gums and teeth and there is bone loss
- Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions (FORLs)
- Tooth abscess
- Stomatitis

Among the most common of these are gingivitis, periodontal disease, and FORLs.

Gingivitis is considered the earliest stage of periodontal disease and is characterized by a thin red line where the gum meets the tooth on most teeth, particularly the upper molars. Periodontal disease (a condition that weakens the structures that support the teeth) occurs when teeth are not properly cleaned. Severe cases often cause tooth loss, and in extreme cases of neglect, can create the need for all the cat's teeth to be extracted. Diseased teeth release toxins and bacteria into the bloodstream that can harm the kidneys and heart of your companion.

FORLs most often affect cats age five years and older. This happens when structures within one or more teeth are destroyed and eventually disappear. Once they reach sensitive areas of the tooth, they can be extremely painful, although cats seldom show it. This will be evident in the cat's reaction when a veterinarian touches the suspected FORL tooth. Tooth resorption can be difficult to diagnose, as symptoms range from an actual hole in the tooth to a little red dot at the gum line. At present, extraction is the only treatment for FORLs, and should be done under the guidance of a veterinary dentist, found often in veterinary specialty centers.



Stomatitis

Oral tumors, and a condition known as stomatitis can affect your cat. Oral tumors can be very aggressive and challenging to treat. If you observe any lumps, swelling, or discolored areas in your cat's mouth, see your veterinarian at once. Your cat could have stomatitis if it is having problems eating and swallowing, losing weight, and exhibiting excessive salivation.

In summary, the preventive measures of brushing your cat's teeth, and having his/her mouth examined by a veterinarian at least annually will go a very long way to help you keep your beloved companion healthy.



Fun Fact:

In the wild where cats eat a natural diet, the teeth are cleaned as they scrape over the bones of their prey.

Volunteer Spotlight on Donna Armstrong By Anne Meddings

An answer to prayer. That's what Donna Armstrong was seeking as she sat in her yard in a state of despair. It was 2015. She had recently overcome very serious medical issues, including cancer, and had almost died. Donna was now struggling with survivor's guilt and also wrestling with the big issues of life -- purpose and meaning. Suddenly, something caught her eye: a homeless momma cat with a litter of playful kittens. Donna perked up. Somehow she knew this was her answer.



Donna left food and water out for the little family, but she wanted to do more. She wanted to rescue them, but they were afraid of people and she wasn't sure how to proceed. After asking around and searching online, she found Forgotten Cats.

Felicia Cross personally helped Donna trap the family and get everyone spayed, neutered, tested and vaccinated. Donna fostered the kittens and Forgotten Cats helped her get them good homes. After this experience Donna was hooked on rescue work. She had found her purpose. And learned that sometimes answers to prayers have tails and whiskers.

Donna is now a core volunteer. She enters adoption applications for Brandywine and Brookhaven into the Forgotten Cats database. She cares for a feral colony, and she fosters kittens from Trainer. Donna finds fostering to be very rewarding. She especially loves working with kittens that need extra help getting socialized, and seeing them get into good homes.

Donna lives in Morton, PA with her husband Richie, who is 100% on board with her volunteer work. Richie has had recent health issues of his own. But having foster kittens in the house brings joy to his heart and helps give him purpose, too. The couple recently put an addition on their home, and the new room is now known as the "kitten room" just for the fosters!

One very special foster named Buddy was ill as a kitten and went blind. Donna nursed him back to health and decided she couldn't live without him. Buddy officially joined Donna and Richie's family in 2017. Buddy is a lovebug with a bright spirit, and Donna considers him a gift from God.

Besides taking care of cats, Donna helps one of her brothers care for their elderly

mother who has dementia. She also manages to work full-time as a programmer for the IT Department at Iron Mountain. Fortunately, she can work from home most of the time.

When she has any free time, Donna likes to write poetry. The act of writing helped her cope with cancer, and she continues to enjoy it as a hobby. Some of her poems about her cancer experiences have even been published in a University of Pennsylvania pamphlet given out to other patients during their cancer treatments. Donna also enjoys creative interior painting, gardening, exercising at the YMCA, and vacations with Richie's family in Maine.

Someday when she's retired, Donna would like to add another volunteer role to her life: she'd like to volunteer with pediatric cancer patients, to encourage them and comfort them during their medical treatments.

In the meantime Donna is very happy to be a part of the Forgotten Cats team, and grateful for the support she gets from fellow volunteers. Donna is especially thankful for Trainer volunteer Neal Stephens, who makes herself available to help Donna at the clinic after hours. And she'll never forget the help she got from Felicia Cross when she was just starting out on the journey to becoming a rescue worker.

**Thank you for everything, Donna!
Forgotten Cats is so fortunate to have you volunteering
with us to help save cats in need.**

Forgotten Cats

11/22/2015

Sitting in my yard thinking
What my purpose in life could be
My thoughts and hopes sinking
Prayed to God to help me.
I got my answer before I was done
I looked around and then I saw
Playing, rolling and just having fun
Momma cat and shadow of little paw
I then left food and drink for momma and kittens
At first kittens did not come up or close to me
Then they ran out to where I was sitting
But only so close so Momma could see
I wanted to take care and bring all in-side
I tried to catch them but they would then hide
I looked on line and asked around town
Forgotten cats was only answer I found
Founder Felicia helped me catch, get shots, test, fixed for all
Showed me how to foster kittens, and find them homes
Felicia devotion to cats takes up most of her time.
Inspired me to become volunteer to create apps which is just fine.

We caught and stopped Papa cat from having more kin
I took care of his health but could not bring him in
Sent him Like Momma into the wild because they were used to that
Thankfully, both are better off because of Forgotten Cats.
The months pass since all this has happened. As promised,
I am very impressed with the sacrifice, time, Love to be honest
I met so many devoted, caring people with purpose.
All with a goal to help find homes for the Cats others think worthless
Momma cat is now back daily to get feed and say Hi.
I love her and she will love and trust me by and by.
There are more forgotten cats that I have hope I can help
Thank God for the purpose I asked for, my heart has truly felt.
For-ever grateful to Forgotten Cats and Felicia Cross.

- Donna Wadsworth Armstrong

Adoption Update:

We love a senior cat adoption story! Princess was living outside for months. Her beautiful coat was matted, she was scared, and she was hungry. Luckily, she wandered onto a kind woman's property and she got her the help she needed.

Forgotten Cats TNVR'd 20 cats on her property. Some were feral and were released, many were kittens that were socialized and adopted, and a few were friendly adults that were held and placed for adoption.

From the first day in our care, we knew Princess was a sweetheart. Princess went to her forever home this summer after her new family saw her beautiful photos and bio online. The moment they placed her in the carrier to go home she immediately started purring.

Her new family shares, "I wanted you to know that Princess is just perfect for us and I think she thinks we're perfect for her. There has been nil adjustment period and everyone is so comfortable, satisfied and happy. Thanks for all you did for facilitating this match." This sure sounds like a match-made in heaven.

Congrats to both Princess and her family!



STATUS UPDATE:

In July, we sterilized 1302 cats and placed 188 cats into loving forever homes.

Visit our website at
www.forgottencats.org

Lets Keep in Touch!

**302-429-0124 (DE)
215-219-8148 (PA)**

**4023 Kennett Pike, Suite 422
Greenville, DE 19807**

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