

Start With the Mouth

One-page quick guide for pet owners

Five essential messages

1. Bad breath is not normal.
2. A shiny tooth crown is not proof of mouth health.
3. Small gum disease over a long time can produce major consequences.
4. Raw meaty bones are food/medicine, not merely ingredients.
5. Any feeding advice that ignores dentistry and periodontal disease is incomplete.

The practical sequence

1. Observe safely. Do not force the mouth open.
2. Take bad breath, red gums, altered chewing and reluctance seriously.
3. Seek competent dental assessment when there are warning signs.
4. Treat pain and infection where necessary.
5. Maintain the mouth with suitable raw meaty bones food/medicine.
6. Watch the feedback: breath, gums, chewing, vitality, coat, stools, comfort and behaviour.

The adviser test

Before accepting any feeding advice, ask:

- Does this advice begin with the mouth?
- Does it explain how the food cleans teeth and massages gums?
- Does it distinguish a healthy mouth from a diseased mouth?
- Does it have a plan for puppies, kittens, abnormal mouths and older animals?
- Does it help escape product-dependence?

Keep the larger picture in view

The pet's mouth is the practical starting point. The larger framework is the Cybernetic Hypothesis of Periodontal Disease: chronic disease understood as disturbed biological regulation at the interface of food, microbes, tissues, immunity, behaviour, time and environment.