

## Dogs' Healthy Teeth Matter, Too

**Healthy Teeth for Pets campaign stresses importance of feline and canine dental care.**

Posted: February 18, 2009, 5 a.m. EST

Iams has launched a Healthy Teeth for Pets campaign ([HealthyTeethForPets.com](http://HealthyTeethForPets.com)) in light of National Pet Dental Health Month in February. Eukanuba, Petside.com, and Veterinary Pet Insurance have also joined the campaign as partners.

"The website is designed to be a resource for consumers to go to understand the importance of dental care," said Amy Dicke, DVM, technical services veterinarian at Procter & Gamble Pet Care, the maker of Iams and Eukanuba.

The site includes tips on how to brush a pet's teeth and the benefits of long-term dental care, she added.

As part of the campaign, pet dental health kits will be sent to select veterinary hospitals and retail outlets. Kits will contain a teeth cleaning chart, a guide for good oral health booklet, coupons for discounts on pet food products, a discount offer from VPI, and a finger brush.

In related news, VPI recently tracked claims data from its more than 466,000 pets insured nationwide and found that combined claims for dental conditions were the 11th most common type of claim received in 2008. The company received more than 13,000 claims for conditions related to excessive tartar and tooth decay, oral abscesses, and root canals.

"Most people brush regularly and take care of their teeth because they know dental conditions can be painful and costly," said Carol McConnell, DVM, vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI. "Ideally, this mindset should translate to how people care for their pets' teeth. Pets are usually only brought to the veterinarian for dental problems once an infection is evident or when the pet's mouth pain is noticeably affecting his or her ability to chew or play with toys."

To prevent serious health problems, VPI says pet owners should have their pets' oral and dental health evaluated by a veterinarian regularly.

The campaign suggests that pet owners partake in a dental health program that incorporates the 3 "Ds": daily brushing to remove plaque; dentistry, or regular teeth cleanings performed by a veterinarian; and diet, which is important to good oral health.