



Canine Periodontal Disease (PD)

WHAT IS PD?

Inflammation of tissues and bone that surround and support the teeth due to a bacterial infection. PD is sometimes referred to as dental disease.

HOW DOES PD DEVELOP?

When food and bacteria collect along the gumline, plaque forms that eventually hardens into **tartar**. Tartar irritates the gums, causing inflammation called **gingivitis**. If left untreated, the tartar builds up under the gum line, resulting in PD. Dogs may experience pain, infection, abscesses, and tooth loss as the disease becomes more severe.



Gingivitis

Note the redness and inflammation at the gumline



Tartar

Note the large amount of yellowish material on the teeth



Severe PD

Note the missing teeth, tartar, and gingivitis

DOES YOUR DOG HAVE PD?

The earliest and most common sign is **bad breath**. The following signs may indicate your dog has **advanced PD**:

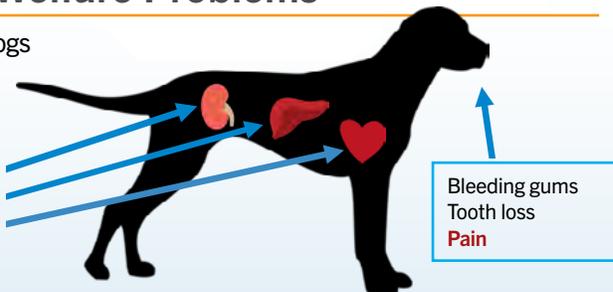
- Excessive drooling, licking
- Repeated pawing or rubbing of face and mouth
- Swelling of the face
- Difficulty chewing
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Aggression, head shyness (moving away) when attempting to look in the mouth

If you see any of these signs, consult with your veterinarian for treatment options.

PD Causes Significant Health and Welfare Problems

More than 80% of dogs over 2 years of age have PD

Increased risk of:
Kidney disease
Liver disease
Heart disease



May increase the risk of premature birth, low birth weight, increased infant mortality, small litters

RISK FACTORS:

Certain characteristics of the dog increase the risk of PD.

BREED SIZE

In general, the smaller the dog, the higher the risk.



AGE

The older the dog, the more likely it is to have some degree of PD.



MUZZLE LENGTH

Short-muzzled breeds may be at increased risk due to overcrowding of the teeth.



BREED

Certain breeds, such as Greyhounds, are known to be at increased risk.



This Animal Care Aid is part of a series developed to provide information about PD in dogs. For more information, refer to the other topics covered in the series ("Monitoring PD in Dogs" and "Preventive Care for PD in Dogs").

Questions? Email us at CenterforAnimalWelfare@usda.gov

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