Stage 1 Periodontal Disease:
There is visible tartar build up on the teeth and slight swelling and redness of the gums.

Stage 2 and 3 Periodontal Disease:
In stage 2, the gums are more swollen and there can be mild loss of bone around the tooth roots which is only visible on x-rays.

Stage 3 looks similar to stage 2 on the surface but x-rays would show more severe bone loss.

Stage 4 Periodontal Disease:
Stage 4 is very serious, with severe tartar accumulation, receded gum lines, tooth damage and decay, and bone loss.

Is there anything I can do at home for my pet’s oral health?

Regularly brushing your pet’s teeth is the single most effective action you can take to keep your pet’s teeth healthy and possibly prevent most of the common oral diseases. Daily brushing is best, but not always possible; brushing several times a week can also be effective.

Most dogs accept brushing but cats can be more resistant. Patience and training are important. There are also many products on the market with claims that they improve dental health, but not all of them are effective.

Talk with your veterinarian about any dental products, treats, dental specific diets, and home brushing activities you are considering for your pet.

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For more information, visit:
avma.org
American Veterinary Dental College
avdc.org
American Animal Hospital Association
aaha.org/pet_owner
Although anesthesia will always have risks, it is safer now than ever before. The risks are very low and are far outweighed by the benefits dentistry will bring to your pet. Most pets are on their feet within minutes of waking up and can usually go home the same day.

**Before Dental Cleaning:**
- Red, swollen gums
- Build-up of tartar and plaque

**After Dental Cleaning:**
- Much healthier gums
- Cleaner teeth

**WHAT ABOUT “ANESTHESIA-FREE” DENTAL CLEANINGS?**
The American Veterinary Dental College does not recommend dental cleanings without anesthesia because it does not allow for cleaning or inspection under the gum line where most disease occurs. A pet that is not anesthetized can also result in injury to the pet or person performing the procedure and also result in unnecessary discomfort, stress and pain for the pet.

**WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF ORAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN A PET?**
Your pet’s teeth should be checked at least once per year by your veterinarian for early signs of a problem and to keep your pet’s mouth healthy. Always use caution when evaluating your pet’s mouth. A pet that is experiencing pain might bite.
- Bad breath
- Reduced appetite
- Broken or loose teeth
- Bleeding from the mouth
- Teeth that are discolored or covered in tartar
- Abnormal chewing, drooling or dropping food from the mouth
- Swelling in the areas surrounding the mouth
- Irritability
- Changes in behavior

**WHAT IS PERIODONTAL DISEASE?**
Periodontal disease is the most common dental condition in dogs and cats. By the time your pet is 3 years old, he or she will very likely already have early evidence of periodontal disease.

Early detection and treatment are critical, because advanced periodontal disease can cause severe problems and pain for your pet. Periodontal disease doesn’t just impact your pet’s mouth; other health problems associated with periodontal disease include kidney, liver and heart muscle changes.

Periodontal disease starts with plaque that hardens into tartar. Tartar above the gum line can often easily be seen and removed, but the plaque and tartar below the gum line are damaging and set the stage for infection and damage to the jawbone and tissues that connect the tooth to the jaw bone. Periodontal disease is graded on a scale of 0 (normal) to 4 (severe).