



# Arbor Animal News

A Quarterly publication from Arbor Animal Clinic

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## February is officially Dental Month

Since 1993, the American Veterinary Dental Society has designated February as Dental Month to focus the attention of pet owners and Veterinarians on the importance of regular pet dental care. Because dental disease is the number one medical problem in dogs and cats and can lead to many other health problems, we are happy to participate in Dental Month. We will offer a big discount on dental services in February and expect a large response as we did last year. You must call for an appointment in February to take advantage of the offer. Several years ago we added October as a (second) dental month because the demand in February was so high.

Dental health begins with an examination of your pet's mouth. We do a dental exam during your pet's annual visit, but it can be scheduled at anytime. If needed, a dental cleaning in our clinic will be recommended. As general anesthesia is necessary to do a thorough cleaning, blood testing prior to the procedure is recommended. Feel free to discuss this with our staff.

Many patients are found to have previously undetected problems at the time of their dental cleaning. This is often due to the fact that we cannot find deep gum-line disease on a patient who is awake. While they are asleep and after a cleaning has been performed, we can use a probe to look for problems such as periodontal pockets and Xray teeth that are suspected of having root abscesses. These teeth may have to be removed (extracted). Some earlier-stage problems can be treated medically. Our doctors will help guide your pet to a healthy state with good oral care.



### Dental Month (Continued)

Although many pets will need one or more dental procedures in their lifetime, the frequency of these procedures may be greatly reduced with home dental care following a cleaning or started when your pet is still a puppy or kitten. This is especially important in some breeds. We carry a full line of dental care products for home use including toothpastes, toothbrushes, and mouth rinses. We also carry dental diets designed to reduce plaque formation. Our receptionists and technical staff can help you find the products that are right for you and your pet.

### Doctors corner:

### Feline CKD

This month I want to focus on a common problem in aging cats. The issue is CKD or chronic kidney disease also known as chronic renal failure. Feline kidney disease is a leading cause of decline in later years of life. The kidneys serve a very crucial role which is to rid the body of toxins while at the same time keeping important electrolytes in balance. The main electrolytes the kidney regulates are potassium, phosphorus, calcium and hydrogen and the kidneys also play a role in red blood cell production. The main toxin produced in the body is from protein metabolism and we call this BUN ( Blood Urea Nitrogen). The kidneys use the water we drink to flush out these toxins very efficiently.

The problem in cats comes from many years ago before cats were domesticated. Cats roamed in the desert lands where water was not as plentiful.

### Doctor's Corner (Continued)

Cats did not know when their next water source would be found so their kidneys became very efficient at concentrating all the toxins in the body in to a small amount of urine. This enabled cats to drink less and still get rid of their metabolic waste products. In today's world cats live much longer lives. Veterinarians are trained to pick up on subtle changes found in behavior or on physical examination. Many owners report their cats losing weight and drinking more water and visiting the litter box more often. This is when we usually recommend blood and urine tests. Combined with a thorough history, these tests are crucial in determining if kidney disease is beginning in your patient. Many times we can diagnose a cat with early kidney disease and drastically slow the decline of the kidneys.

There are many steps we can take to increase the life of our feline friends. Diet and medication can slow down the buildup of these harmful toxins and improve the function of the kidneys and the well-being of the cat. Increasing water intake or giving fluids through an IV or even under the skin may be needed to help with the kidney's removal of the body's natural waste products. It is very important that a veterinarian determine if a patient truly has kidney disease and how advanced it is before decisions can be made about what can be done to help. The wellness blood testing that we offer at your pet's annual exam is a good way to make sure that a senior cat (or dog) has healthy kidneys. We can add months or years of good quality life by making sure we get an accurate diagnosis as early as possible and by taking the necessary steps in slowing down the progression of chronic kidney disease.

- Dr. J. Kautz