

# IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HEALTH



**Periodontal disease is a multifactorial infection that can create or exacerbate many negative local and systemic effects.**

**Dental, oral, and maxillofacial diseases are the most common clinical problems in small animal veterinary practices<sup>1</sup>.**

In addition, there is **a very wide variety of pathologies** that are encountered within the oral cavity. These conditions often cause **significant pain and/or localised, regional and systemic infection**.<sup>2</sup> Since oral health is critical for all other body systems including the other vital assessments (nutrition, pain, etc) it should be **evaluated during every examination in each patient**.

**Oral disease has numerous local, regional and systemic ramifications.**

## Local consequences<sup>3</sup>

- Abscesses
- Mandibular pathologic fracture
- Ocular damage/eye loss
- Increased incidence of oral cancer
- Oronasal fistula

Most of those local consequences may further decrease eating.

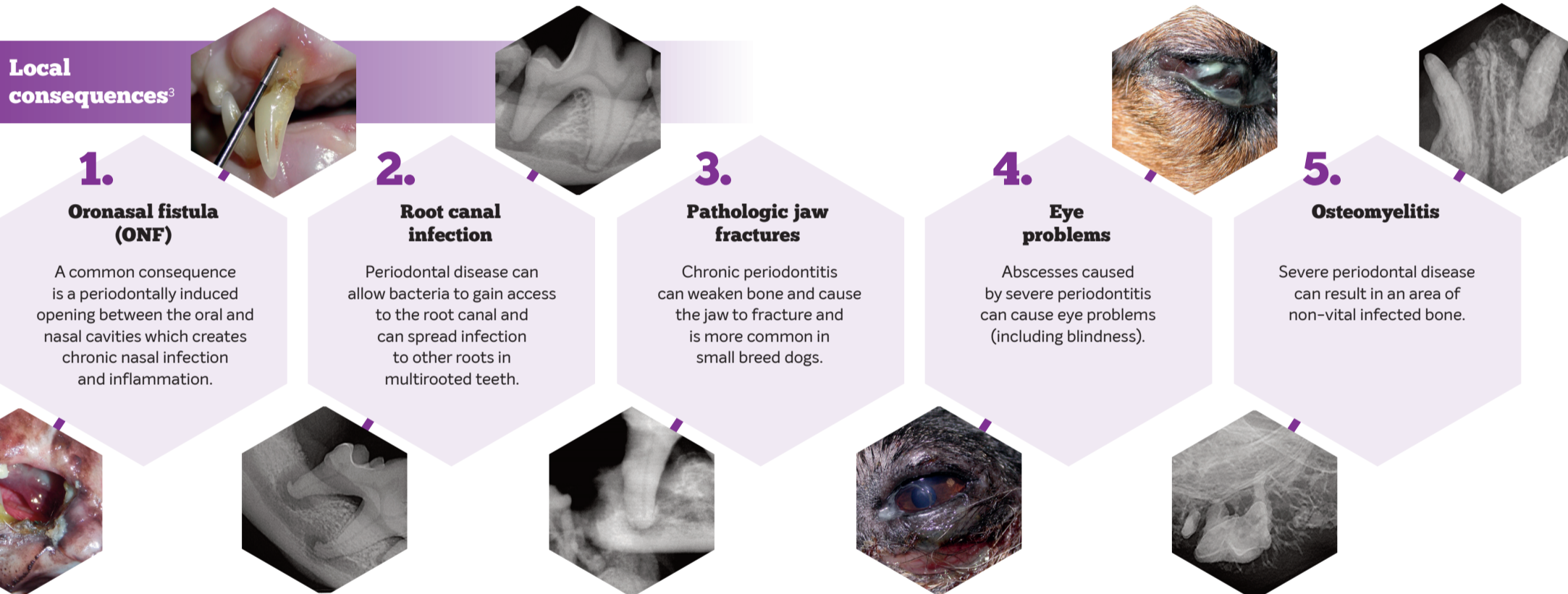
## Systemic diseases which may be exacerbated<sup>4,5,6,7</sup>

- Renal disease<sup>6,8</sup>
- Hepatic disease<sup>4</sup>
- Cardiac disease<sup>9,10</sup>
- Increased inflammatory markers<sup>5,11</sup>

Additional possibilities inferred from human research

- Increased incidence of certain cancers
- Increased incidence and complications of diabetes mellitus
- Early mortality

**All of the above factors demonstrate that oral/dental health is critical to not only the overall patient health, but also quality of life.**



## Questions & Answers

### 1. Why is oral health so important?

Oral diseases are the most common problems in pets, affecting their overall health and decreasing their quality of life.

### 2. When should a pet's oral health be assessed?

Your pet should receive a dental examination at every visit.

### 3. And if there's a problem?

Your vet will diagnose the problem by providing a thorough examination including radiography. Once diagnosed, a safe and reasonable treatment plan will be established.

### 4. What is the major purpose of dental treatment?

Your pet's treatment plan will focus on pain management and infection control.

### 5. How not to miss dental pathology?

Every patient, at every visit should receive a dental examination.

### 6. What is the major purpose of dental treatment?

Pain management and infection control.

## Oral health impacts general health

- For a long time it was thought that bacteria was the primary factor that linked periodontal disease to other infections in the body.
- Therefore, treating inflammation as well as bacteria may not only help manage periodontal diseases, but may also help with the management of other chronic inflammatory conditions.
- More recent research demonstrates that inflammation is significant and may link periodontal disease to other chronic conditions too, such as diabetes and heart disease.
- Furthermore, pets with painful teeth/mouth may experience partial to complete anorexia. They may also not chew properly which is known to decrease proper digestion and assimilation of nutrients regardless of a proper diet.

**As you can see, poor oral health can have significant negative effects both within the oral cavity and systemically as well. Talk to your vet about a complete oral exam.**



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