

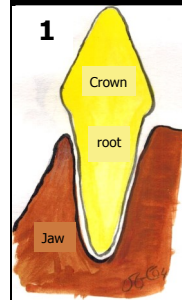
LITTLE MOUNTAIN VETERINARY CLINIC LTD.

46793 Yale Road East, Chilliwack, B.C. V2P 2S5

Dr Eldon R. Reynolds
Large Animal Practice
Phone: 792-7301



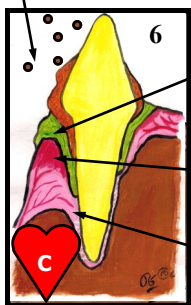
Dr Josephine M. Banyard
Small Animal Practice
Phone: 792-2844
www.littlemountainvet.com



THE TOOTH FAIRY'S TALE

- 1)** The **crown** of the tooth is the white part above the gum line. The **root** of the tooth is very long and sits in the bone of the jaw.
- 2)** The **gums** are attached to the tooth at the base of the enamel at the **cemento-enamel junction**. The gums carry the blood vessels. The root is attached to the bone of the jaw by the strong **periodontal ligaments**.
- 3)** **Plaque (bacteria)** develops on the tooth every day after every meal. In 24 to 48 hours a biofilm develops which protects the bacteria from antibacterial solutions. Only toothbrushing will remove this. To start with, the plaque sits on the middle of the crown of the teeth but tends to continue to develop.
- 4)** **Calcium** which is dissolved in saliva, starts to calcify the plaque to develop **tartar (calculus)**. This tartar can hide harmful bacteria. The tartar continues to grow slowly up and down the crown and even into the 'pockets' of the tooth.
- 5)** When the plaque meets the gum line inflammation of the gums develops from infection caused by the bacteria. Pus develops as the infection progresses into the pockets between the gum and tooth. Initially this infection just causes gingivitis but then it destroys the attachments of the gum to the tooth and also causes **halitosis** (bad breath).
- 6)** The inflammation eats away the jaw bone around the tooth and the periodontal ligaments. The tooth becomes loose and painful. The chronic infection causes halitosis, nasal discharge, abscesses under the eye and damage to organs (heart, liver, kidneys) elsewhere in the body.

Calcium dissolved in saliva



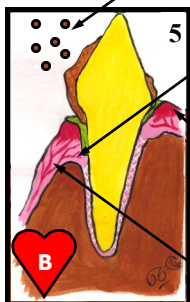
Pus is destroying the periodontal ligaments

Gingivitis

Infection is destroying the supporting bone



Calcium dissolved in saliva



Infection is destroying the attachment of the gum to the tooth

Gingivitis

Enlarged blood vessels due to inflammation



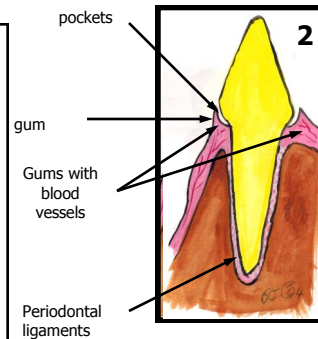
calculus

Gingivitis

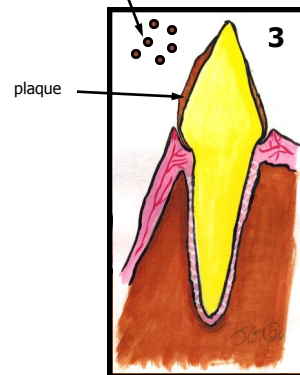
pus



Calcium dissolved in saliva



Calcium dissolved in saliva



This is the best time to do a professional dental cleaning. The disease process can be reversed. Anesthesia is needed to scale and polish the tooth. Scaling above the gumline can be done by animal health technologists. Cleaning below the gumline should be done by veterinarians. Intraoral radiographs of the mouth are needed to diagnose problems on the bone.



If the professional dental cleaning is done at this stage, reattachment of the gum to the tooth is possible. Curettage under the gumline and root planing (scraping the root clean) under anesthesia is needed. This is a surgical procedure and should be done by a veterinarian.



At this stage the disease has progressed and many changes are irreversible. Dental surgery, which may include tooth extractions, is often required. Some teeth can be saved with advanced surgical techniques.

Preanesthetic blood and urine analysis is required