

## February is Pet Dental Health Month!

### Does Your Cat Have “Tuna Breath?”

**D**octor Joann Young is encouraging everyone to have their pet's teeth examined for National Pet Dental Health Month. “Almost three out of four cats have tooth and gum disease by age three, according to the American Veterinary Dental Society,” said Dr. Young. “It is the number one diagnosed problem in small animal clinics today.”

For Dental Health Month, the Cat Doctor of Dover is offering a **10% discount for routine dental preventive care** scheduled in the month of February. This is up to a \$15 value for a Simple Dental Prophylaxis procedure, which includes a dental examination, scaling off plaque and tartar, polishing the teeth, and applying fluoride gel.

Signs of tooth and gum (periodontal) disease include tooth decay, bad breath (“tuna breath”), bleeding gums, and even tooth loss. “Problems begin when food particles and bacteria build up in the cat's mouth, forming plaque and tartar, causing gingivitis and severe periodontal disease. These bacteria can enter the pet's bloodstream and damage the heart, liver, kidneys, and lungs, according to research,” says Dr. Young. “During their lifetime, one out of four domestic cats will develop pockets of pus separating the teeth from the gums, which makes it hurt to eat causing weight loss and other problems. That means they can use up over two of their nine lives!”

### Two More Winners in the “Name the Condo” Contest!

**T**he Cat Doctor has acquired two more Luxury Townhouses (“Cat Condos”) to board your favorite feline(s) while you're out of town. The runners-up from the “Name the Condo” contest (see previous *Caterwaulers*, Vol. 1) have been awarded their prizes, and the winners are:

Cat Tail Castle (Anna K., Alton)

Pet & Purr Resort (Deborah L., Dover)

We now have a total of six condos (the other four are named Cats a Purr-Inn, Purrsia Palace, Taj Meow, and The Smitten Kitten Inn) with special four poster oak beds to sleep in, private bathrooms, and views of the outdoor bird feeders from glass windows. Please call us and schedule a reservation for your furry friend in advance, they go quickly (especially during vacations & holidays)!

### Joy Becomes Veterinary Nutritional Counselor

We are very proud of our Veterinary Technician (Nurse) Joy, who successfully completed the curriculum for a Nutritional Counselor from Hill's®, the maker of Science Diets. You can read about Macavity going on a diet in Volume 2, Issue 1 (on the Cat Doctor's website), and give Joy a call for any diet questions.

## No Cavities for Macavity!

**M**acavity (the Mystery Cat, from T.S. Eliot) was having a little bit of “tuna breath”



himself, and during his annual checkup Dr. Young did her usual thorough dental exam. “He had some plaque and tartar buildup,” she said, “which could lead to more serious tooth disease, eating problems, and even blood infections causing heart and kidney disease in the worst case.” She recommended that he return for a Dental Prophylaxis procedure, which was scheduled.

### Preparing for Cleaning and Scaling

Macavity couldn't have anything to eat the night before he came in, so his stomach would be empty in case he vomited. He was weighed when he came in to the Cat Doctor, and he continued to do well on his weight loss diet. He was then given some medicine for pain and a mild tranquilizer before the procedure, so he would already have control over any pain even before he woke up.

The procedure started with Macavity breathing some gas anaesthetic through a mask, similar to the same medicine human doctors use to make people sleep during surgery. According to Dr. Young, the gas is safer, and they can wake up sooner and go home on the same day. “When they get very sleepy, we put a breathing tube down the windpipe for the gas, which protects their airway,” she explained.

### A Manicure, Pedicure, and Foot Massage

Joy or Sara will assist the doctor, and when Macavity was intubated with the breathing tube, they would place a small pillow under his head, keep him warm, and trim his nails (they actually have to “massage” or squeeze the feet to expose his nails). A small catheter is placed in a vein to give him fluids. “Most problems occur from dehydration, low temperature, or low blood sugar during the procedure,” Dr. Young said, “so the extra intravenous fluid has some sugar in it to help him.” He was placed on a heart monitor, and the

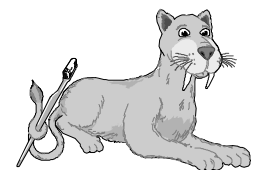
oxygen in his blood is carefully checked during the cleaning. A special ointment is placed in his eyes to keep them moist.

When plaque grows on a tooth surface, it gets worse and turns into tartar (or calculus). This is removed from the teeth using a high-frequency ultrasonic cleaner to scale and clean the teeth, just like your own dentist uses. Hand scaling is also performed to remove tartar, especially when it is under the gums where the ultrasonic cleaner can't be used. After the teeth are cleaned, Dr. Young does a careful exam, counting all the teeth and charting any troublesome areas to watch in the record. One of the technicians will then hand polish the teeth (to remove any small grooves that might have been left from the hand scaler) with a special compound that has fluoride in it to prevent cavities, or holes in the outer surface of the tooth.

### Time to Wake Up, and Smile!

Macavity was given 100% pure oxygen to breathe, which helped to clear the gas out of his lungs. When he was awake, the breathing tube was removed, and he was transferred to a cage in the recovery area with a heating pad to keep him warm.. Dr. Young said, “We encourage him to eat as soon as possible, because we like to keep his blood sugar up, and then we know that he's feeling better. It can be very painful for a cat to eat with severe tooth disease.”

Macavity was flashing his pearly whites around the clinic very soon, and could now eat his tuna without any “tuna breath!”



## Testimonials Needed

The Cat Doctor of Dover's web-master is revising our award-winning website at <http://www.catdoctordover.com>, and he would like some new “testimonials” from other clients (besides Macavity and Fuzzy's owners) for the new, improved website. If you prefer verbal instead of written words, we also sponsor a “Cat of the Week” for Cocheco Valley Humane Society on The Bay (98.7FM). Call 742-MEOW (6369) or email [jerry@catdoctordover.com](mailto:jerry@catdoctordover.com). Thank you!