



**John Burns** BVMS MRCVS

The idea for **Burns Pet Nutrition** came while working as a Veterinary Surgeon in general practice during the early 90s. I noticed that many pets were suffering from the same ailments time and time again. Believing poor diet to be the primary cause, I recommended that clients feed their dogs home-cooked food to allow the body to function naturally, free from a build-up of toxic waste.

Of course, feeding home-cooked food is a time consuming business, and back in 1993 no brand of healthy pet food existed. This motivated me to develop my own **Original** dry food recipe based on chicken, brown rice and vegetables.

The concept was simple - a complete ready-made diet containing all the benefits of home cooked food.

25 years on, we have a diverse clientele of happy and healthy pets and our product range has evolved to include a number of high-quality diets for dogs, cats and rabbits.

*John Burns*  
Veterinary Surgeon **John Burns** BVMS MRCVS

## Tooth tartar & periodontal disease

*Periodontal means "relating to tissues or regions around the teeth."*

**Periodontal Disease** is the most common illness affecting pets, and is even more prevalent than excessive weight gain. Surveys show that between 60 and 80% of both dogs and cats are affected. Many pets do not show obvious signs of discomfort although they must be suffering.

Periodontal disease causes bad breath, inflammation, bleeding and erosion of the gums, eventually leading to loosening and loss of the teeth.

As well as affecting the mouth area, periodontal disease can damage other body systems. In humans, periodontal disease is linked to arthritis, cardiovascular disease, stress and anxiety, obesity, diabetes and stroke. In pets, links are now being made to diabetes, heart disease, kidney and liver disease. Bacteria and toxins can enter the bloodstream from the mouth and cause generalised inflammation, especially when animals are suffering from other ailments or have defective immune systems.

## What causes periodontal disease?

In a healthy individual, saliva from the salivary glands and gums, lubricates and protects the mouth. If conditions are not optimal, saliva forms **dental plaque**, a thin film on the teeth which provides a framework for bacteria and waste products.

Plaque is a sticky and persistent coating which encourages bacterial proliferation and deposition of mineral salts of calcium and phosphorus to form **dental tartar** (calculus).

## What causes unhealthy saliva?

Build-up of toxic waste products in the system, in my opinion, as with many other disease conditions, is the underlying cause of periodontal disease. Production of waste (toxins) is a normal part of the metabolic process. If this is excessive due to poor quality food, overfeeding (even high quality food), excessive levels of protein & fat, or chemicals in the diet, these wastes accumulate in the organ systems and body fluids, including the saliva. You can read more about how toxins damage health in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** (pp 4-6 *Development of Disease*).

Food allergy/intolerance may also cause inflammation which increases the toxic burden, so it is important to feed a more natural, hypoallergenic diet, free from colourings and other chemicals. You can read more about food allergy/intolerance in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** (pp. 9-10)

## How can diet help?

A diet using simple, wholesome natural foods, that is high in complex carbohydrates (typically whole grains), which will minimise the amount of pollution in the system. You should avoid additives (other than essential vitamins and minerals) and look for a diet low in fat and protein, both of which produce more waste than complex carbohydrate.

A diet that is hypoallergenic would also be beneficial as it is unlikely to cause allergic reaction. All of these characteristics help to avoid the accumulation of toxic waste in the saliva. You can read about this in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** (pp. 4-7 and 9-10).



## What about other methods of keeping the teeth clean?

**Brushing the teeth and specialist abrasive foods** which are claimed to prevent dental tartar may have some beneficial effect but they do not tackle the real base cause of tooth tartar and gum disease. Freeing the system of toxic waste by following a natural diet will ensure clean saliva and a healthy mouth as well as all-round health and vitality throughout the body.

## How much food should I give?

Overfeeding contributes to the toxic burden so must be avoided. Recommended feeding amounts should be treated with caution as every dog has individual needs. Weighing the food each time is more accurate and effective than going by eye.

Many pet owners believe that they cannot be overfeeding as their pet is not overweight. Very often that is not correct; waste products can accumulate in the system of a dog which is of normal weight.

**The Burns Health and Nutrition Team** (see back of leaflet) can give you individually tailored advice on finding the right food and the right feeding amounts for your dog

**Or...**

See my **Daily Feeding Amounts** leaflet. Download it from the Burns website: ([www.burnspet.co.uk](http://www.burnspet.co.uk)) or request a physical copy.



## What can cause periodontal disease?

- Poor quality food
- Overfeeding
- Food allergy/intolerance
- Excess protein & fat
- Chemicals

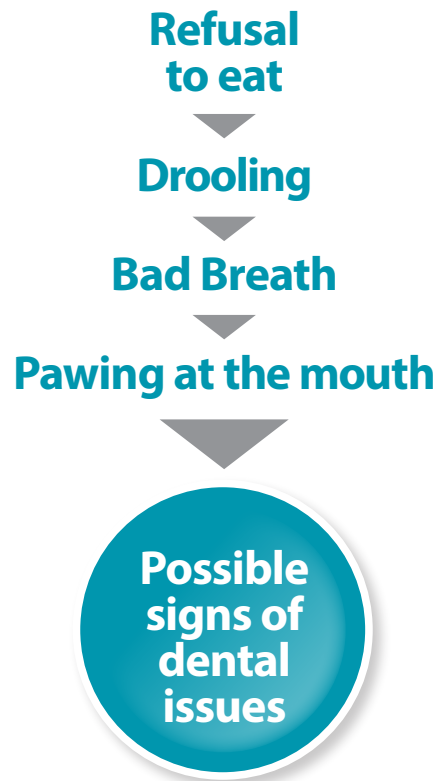
Toxic waste build-up

Unclean saliva

Dental plaque

Tooth tartar

Periodontal disease



## Top tip!

Don't panic when changing diet and you do not see an improvement after a few weeks. Any change in diet we advise a full 3 months on a new diet will allow you to make an informed judgement as this time frame has allowed the body to adjust and benefit to the change.

If you find that a change in diet alone is not enough to help your dog's dental problem, you may need to consult with your vet as treatment may be required. If they are on a natural, hypoallergenic and high quality diet following any treatment this will help to avoid future issues and help to support the production of healthy saliva that will aim to protect your dogs teeth.

## Support when you need it

Our **expert pet nutritionists** can give you straightforward and **individually tailored** advice on managing nutritional support for specific health problems or fine tuning feeding amounts.



Freephone **0800 083 66 96**  
 Republic of Ireland (freephone) **1800 836696**  
 Email **info@burnspet.co.uk**

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Promotes excellent health, and for dogs prone to...

- Itchy skin/ears/feet
- Upset digestion
- Poo Eating
- Weight problems
- Bad breath
- Body odour
- Full anal glands
- Persistent moulting
- Behaviour problems
- Lack of vitality
- Stiffness
- Tear staining
- Fussy eating
- Tooth tartar

All of these may be diet related

This leaflet is part of a series on health and nutrition written by John Burns.

For more information please see my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** booklet which can be downloaded from [www.burnspet.co.uk](http://www.burnspet.co.uk) or request a paper copy



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# THE VETERINARY GUIDE TO TOOTH TARTAR

By **John Burns** BVMS MRCVS



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