

# Mouth pain in dogs

## Overview

Does your dog have a painful mouth? Have their eating habits changed? Do they shy away from food?

The most common causes of a painful mouth is tooth and gum disease. Dogs with sore mouths often eat on one side of their face, eat less or, if the pain is severe, they may stop eating completely. Some dogs will shy away from their food, cry when they eat or try eating but stop due to pain.

It is important to check your dog's mouth regularly, keep their mouths clean by brushing their teeth, and have annual check-ups at your vets. Contact your vet if you think your dog has a painful mouth.

## Symptoms of a painful mouth

- Rubbing or pawing their face or mouth
- Difficulty eating, eating on one side of their face
- Eating less or nothing at all
- Crying when their mouth is open (yawning, panting, opened by their owner or the vet)
- Shying away from food.

## Causes

### **Tooth and gum disease**

Tooth and gum disease can be very painful, especially if the inside of the tooth (the sensitive part) is exposed. Common dental problems include tartar build up, wobbly teeth, broken teeth, tooth root abscesses and gingivitis (inflammation of the gums).

### **Stomatitis**

Stomatitis is inflammation of the inside of the mouth. Lots of things can cause the mouth or lips to become inflamed. Infections, viruses and allergies can all cause stomatitis.

### **Wounds in the mouth**

Wounds inside the mouth can be tricky to spot, puncture injuries from sticks are especially common.

### **Burns in the mouth**

Dogs often eat things they shouldn't. This includes hot items and chemicals which can both cause nasty burns to the inside of the mouth.

### **Mouth tumours**

Tumours in the mouth can get infected and sore. When they become large they can get in the way whilst eating.

### **Sore throat**

Dogs get sore throats just like people. They are usually caused by Kennel Cough or a bacterial or viral infection. If your dog has a sore throat you may notice them swallowing lots or gagging.

### **Ulcers**

Mouth ulcers are small painful white lumps on the gums that can be caused by many different diseases including kidney disease.

## When to contact your vet

If you notice any of the symptoms above or a change in your dog's eating habits, make an appointment with your vet straight away.

**You know your dog best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.**

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