



# Overcoming Dentaphobia

How do you persuade your clients to embrace pet dental care?

by John L. Meyer, PhD, and Carolyn C. Shadle, PhD

WHEN PATTI MILLER, OF EASTON, MD., told us that her cat had two teeth extracted, we asked her why. “Oh, the cat’s mouth looked terrible. The teeth were green and her breath smelled awful.”

“Had you had the cat’s teeth cleaned in the past?” we asked.

“Oh, no. That’s too pricey, and there did not appear to be any problem.”

You’ve heard this story many times. It appears that when veterinarians recommend a full dental check-up or cleaning, most clients don’t understand the importance.

Natasha Wilks, BVSc, of High Performance Vets, in Brisbane, Australia, says, “Unfortunately, clients hear what they want to hear unless you are very specific and direct in your communication. The language you use is very important, as is the way it is delivered. Use the word ‘need’ or ‘must.’ Convey certainty with your voice.”