

Treating Dental Disease



In Your Pet



Signs of dental disease

Symptoms of dental disease include:

- ▶ Bad breath, called halitosis
- ▶ Gingivitis – red or inflamed gums that may sometimes bleed
- ▶ Tartar, often seen as raised yellowy-brownish material which stain teeth
- ▶ Facial swelling – often one sided due to an infection of the tooth root
- ▶ Excessive salivation from pain when swallowing
- ▶ Dropping food, difficulty chewing food or reluctance to eat from pain
- ▶ Resistance to being handled around the mouth
- ▶ Pawing at the mouth



Your pet will continue to eat despite dental pain in preference to starvation. If your pet is choosing not to eat please contact your vet immediately.

My pet requires a dental operation

Your vet has decided that your pet has periodontal disease and requires a dental operation. Your pet will require a general anaesthetic as this allows the vet to safely and thoroughly examine the mouth. Once the vet has fully examined the teeth, including inside and outside surfaces and under the gum, they will be best placed to develop a plan to return your pet's mouth back to health.

To assist, your veterinarian may recommend that a series of x-rays are completed. X-rays examine below the gum line and assist in visualising structures of the teeth that cannot be visualised with the naked eye. X-rays will assist your vet assess whether a tooth may be broken, the tooth roots is damaged, the enamel may be too badly eroded, or the bones and other supporting structures can no longer continue to support the tooth.



Teeth are cleaned by both a hand and ultrasonic scaler. Both these devices remove the hard tartar which allows bacteria in plaque to hide from daily cleaning. The ultrasonic scaler uses high frequency sound to break up tartar without damage to the tooth. The clean is finished with a polish to remove the rough surface left after scaling which otherwise would of allowed the build up of plaque.

Cleaner teeth for better health.



Does my pet require an anaesthetic?

Your vet has considered the risks of allowing dental disease to continue untreated in your pet and advised that a dental procedure is required. It is a common occurrence within a veterinary clinic but is not a simple procedure for your pet. The complete examination of teeth requires your pet to keep their mouth open, just as we would for a dentist. Therefore to allow a full and complete examination of your pet's teeth they must be anaesthetised.

A general anaesthetic ensures the best and safest outcome for both the veterinarian and your pet. Plaque is most damaging below the gum line and the use of sharp dental instruments to remove this requires your pet to remain absolutely still. Similarly, complete examination of the teeth requires examination for periodontal disease on both the outside and also the inside of teeth. This can only be completed while your pet is anaesthetised to allow the vet access to these areas.

Procedures such as x-rays, to assess below the gum line, and polishing, to ensure a smooth finish on the enamel coating of teeth after cleaning, can only be completed on a pet that is anaesthetised. Dental procedures completed without anaesthesia will only cosmetically clean the teeth, providing a false sense of security that periodontal disease has been corrected and your pet's mouth has been returned to health.





Medications

Your veterinarian may provide medication either before or post operatively to treat an infection or manage pain that may be associated with the required dental procedure . Ensure that you follow directions as labelled.

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs, or NSAIDs, will help minimise discomfort from the procedure. NSAIDs are medications that reduce inflammation and swelling.

Antibiotics may be prescribed if your vet deems it necessary to treat a bacterial infection immediately before, during and after the dental procedure.

Home care

- ✓ Give all medications as prescribed by your veterinarian.
- ✓ Attend all scheduled revisits.
- ✓ Water may be given when your pet returns home as usual.
- ✓ Feed only small amounts the night of the anaesthetic.
- ✓ Your vet will advise you if any changes to your pet's diet are appropriate following the procedure.



Meeting your pet's needs

Good dental health is a critical component of your pet's overall health. When dental disease is present in your pet, treatment has been shown to dramatically improve their quality of life.

Dental disease is one of the most common problems affecting cats and dogs over the age of three. Current treatment methods available from your vet will provide the best opportunity for dental disease to be removed in a pain and stress free manner. No animal need live with any discomfort associated with dental disease.

Your veterinarian is the trusted professional to meet your pet's needs. We trust that the information contained within this leaflet will help you work with your vet to identify and develop a plan to correct dental disease in your pet

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