

GENERAL DENTISTRY INFORMATION



The Grove
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

770-467-3104

groveanimalhospital.com

WHY DOES MY PET NEED A DENTAL CLEANING?

- Bad breath is not normal and is a sign of serious oral infection.
- Most animals have at least one painful tooth and no way to communicate.
- Dental infections can affect the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys.
- Dental disease is the most common problem of dogs and cats yet is commonly overlooked.
- Once yearly (twice-yearly for some) professional dental cleanings and adequate home care throughout the life of the pet is recommended.

WHAT IS INVOLVED WITH DENTAL CARE?

A complete Oral Assessment, treatment and prevention procedure should include the following important steps:

1. Pre-anesthetic physical exam including blood work and organ function tests as well as evaluation of the bite, abnormal tooth wear patterns, growths or gum disease
2. Oral examination of each tooth under general anesthesia
3. Calculus removal from the visible parts of the teeth
4. Sub-gingival (below-the-gum-line) scaling, root planing, and curettage where indicated
5. Tooth polishing
6. Irrigation
7. A post-cleaning exam and radiographs
8. Dental charting to keep a record of abnormalities
9. Therapy if necessary
10. Home care instructions
11. A follow-up appointment and periodic rechecks to see how well you are performing home care

*Adopted from The Practice of Veterinary Dentistry by Dr. Jan Bellows

IS ANASTHESIA SAFE FOR MY PET?

There are risks involved with the use of general anesthesia however; most anesthetic complications can be avoided by close monitoring and patient care. Anesthesia is absolutely necessary for safe and effective dental care. At Woodland Animal Hospital, we take anesthesia safety very seriously. Only the most modern and safest anesthesia medications and protocols are used. Also, we monitor anesthetic depth very closely both physically and with the latest technology to ensure that only the amount needed is used for the procedure. In fact, there is a much lighter dose needed than other procedures such as spays and neuters. The risk of harm from the presence of dental disease is much higher than the risk of well-monitored and properly supported anesthesia.

WHY ARE DENTAL X-RAYS IMPORTANT?

Dental radiographs allow us to see the area beneath the gum line where up to 75% of tooth structure lies. By taking full mouth radiographs, we can more accurately diagnose very common diseases. Studies have shown, disease was incompletely diagnosed 70% of the time without x-rays. Common findings using dental radiography include: periodontal disease, tooth resorptions, impacted teeth, retained root fragments, dead teeth, broken tooth roots, and abscessed teeth. We generally recommend a set of full mouth x-rays at 6 months of age in conjunction with the spay or neuter procedure or with the first dental cleaning. Follow up x-rays will be recommended based on the type and extent of disease present. Without x-rays, most of our patients would suffer in silence with a painful mouth.



Non-vital teeth



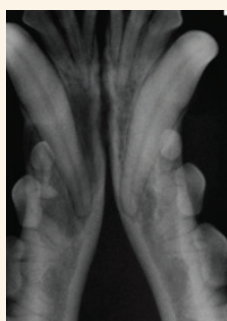
Tooth Resorption- dog



Non-vital teeth



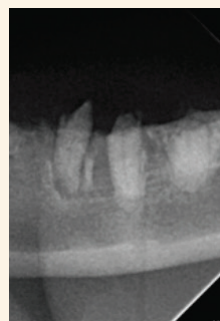
Abnormal tooth development with abscess



Dentigerous Cyst



Periodontal & endodontic disease
weakening jaw



Cat retained tooth roots after supposed full-mouth extractions

DENTAL CARE

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TREATMENTS REQUIRED FOR BASIC DENTAL CARE

PRE-ANESTHETIC BLOOD PROFILE:

Performed prior to procedure to assess general health and help to ensure safer anesthetic event for pets 6 years and older. For pets younger than 6 years, the profile is highly recommended.

DENTAL PROCEDURE

The teeth are cleaned above the gumline with an ultrasonic scaler instrument and below the gumline with sterile dental instruments, then polished to seal small defects and create a smooth surface which slows plaque adherence in the future.

Fluoride is applied to decrease sensitivity and further decrease plaque adherence. The pockets between teeth and gum are measured and a dental record is created noting pocket depth as well as tooth/gum defects. Includes associated anesthesia, pulse and oxygenation monitoring, nursing care and IV catheter for fluids to help maintain normal blood pressure and protect kidney function.

TREATMENTS RECOMMENDED WITH EVERY DENTAL PROCEDURE

DIGITAL DENTAL X-RAYS

X-rays are taken of the entire mouth to check the 50% of the tooth which cannot be seen without x-rays. This may show underlying painful problems such as tooth root abscess, root fracture, cystic lesion or bone loss that may not be visible without the use of x-rays. Printed copies of the x-rays will be sent home following the procedure.

SEALANT APPLICATION

Dental Sealant may be applied at close of procedure and greatly slows down the build-up of tartar and progression of dental disease after the cleaning procedure. An important and easy method of disease prevention between dental procedures.

WHY DOES MY PET NEED A DENTAL CLEANING?

Dental disease is by far the most prevalent health problem and cause of prolonged pain in dogs and cats. Tartar, made up of bacteria and plaque, accumulate on pet's teeth. Without dental care, this leads to gingivitis, gingivital recession and infection of the tooth roots and surrounding bone. Once under the gum line, the bacteria travels in the bloodstream to all internal organs (heart, liver, kidneys, brain) leading to chronic damage to their structure and decreasing their function, shortening the life span of the pet by as much as 25%. This process can be avoided with regular home care and routine professional cleanings.

WHY ARE DENTAL X-RAYS IMPORTANT?

Dental radiology (x-rays) is an essential tool in both humans and pets to complete the dental assessment and generate an acceptable therapeutic plan. 50% of each tooth is below the gum line making it impossible to examine any other way. X-rays will uncover any hidden painful disease such as root abscesses, root fractures, severe bone loss of the jaw, and cystic lesions so that they can be corrected during the procedure. Dental x-rays are especially imperative in pets due to their high tolerance of pain and inability to communicate it.

WHAT DOES A DENTAL CLEANING ENTAIL?

Once a pet's health has been thoroughly assessed by the doctors exam and laboratory data (blood work), an IV catheter is placed. The IV catheter is important to deliver the safest forms of anesthesia as well as deliver IV fluids that support blood pressure and remove toxins (caused by bacteria) from the bloodstream. If significant gingivitis is present, an injectable dose of antibiotics will be given prior to the procedure to protect the bloodstream and begin the healing phase. In most cases, only a light plane of general anesthesia is required. Once under general anesthesia, a complete exam of the mouth will be done searching for pockets of bone loss, loose or broken teeth and tumors. The entire crown of each tooth cleaned with an ultrasonic scaler instrument, and then a root planning procedure is done to remove the bacteria and plaque that is under the gum line. When all the debris has been removed, the crown of each tooth receives both a polishing and fluoride treatment. It is also recommended to apply a sealant to the enamel to aid with its protection.

