

Dental Care in Pets – What for?

This article and related photos are made with the cooperation of Jan Bellows, D.V.M. Dipl. AVDC

Dental Care is necessary to provide optimal health and quality of life and optimize the chances of a longer life. Diseases of the oral cavity, if left untreated, are often painful and can contribute to other local or systemic diseases (Cardiovascular, renal, hepatic to name a few).

We therefore advise and practice regular check ups of the oral cavity while your pet is visiting our clinic and will advise you in line with our findings on the path to follow to take care of your pet's teeth in the best way. Our experience has taught us that an oral cavity examination should be done at least once yearly and patients experiencing mild gingivitis/parodontitis should be checked on a half yearly bases. If the problems are more severe your vet will inform you of the regular check up times in your pets specific case.



What do we look for when examining an awake animal?

If the pet allows us we evaluate the head and oral cavity visually and by palpation. Abnormal signs we look for include pain; halitosis; drooling; dysphagia (difficulty swallowing); asymmetric, discolored, fractured or mobile teeth; inflammation and bleeding; and changes in the range of motion or signs of pain in the temporo-mandibular joint. We check the eyes, the lymphnodes, the nose, the lips, teeth, mucous membranes, gingiva, area between gum tissue and cheeks, palatal and lingual surfaces of the mouth, tonsils and salivary ducts. Furthermore we look for abnormal discoloration, growths and ulceration. Besides this we focus on age-, breed- related dental conditions and common abnormalities.

As you can understand not all animals allow us to examine this widely and sometimes we only partially manage to examine all above mentioned. Based on what we are able to see we will discuss a treatment plan with you and advise you on an estimate. This estimate of costs for treatment will be completed upon thorough examination of the patient while under anaesthesia. Based on the original estimate you will have a rough idea between which numbers the cost will vary but if you want we can inform you more precisely when the thorough investigation has been done.

What sort of examination/treatment will be advised?

1. Pre-Operative Blood, Urine, ECG tests performed and reviewed,
2. Pre-Anaesthetic Medication, Induction, Intubation, Anaesthesia & Monitoring,
3. Thorough Oral Cavity examination,
4. Intraoral Radiographs,
5. Scaling of teeth using hand or ultrasonic devise,
6. Polishing of teeth,
7. Perform sublingual irrigation to remove debris and polishing paste and to inspect the crowns and subgingival areas,
8. Extractions/Surgery if needed,
9. Apply oral medication if needed.

After this your pet will be brought to his cage to recover and will be closely monitored by one of our nurses. Upon collection you will get information on how the examination, treatment and recovery went, what you can expect at home in terms of recovery after the anaesthesia and the treatment installed and what you can do at home to keep your pets teeth in best possible condition. Depending on the severity of the findings a follow up plan has been installed for regular check ups in order to safeguard your pet's health.

What can you do at home?

There are multiple aides available to help you give best care to your pet's oral cavity. If started at a young age most pets will allow you to brush their teeth, however most pets are reluctant if started at a later age. This is why other products have been developed to help you.

1. High quality pet food help to delay/stop plaque and tartar build up and give optimum health to your pet.
2. Special pet tooth brushes for brushing pets teeth. (brushes like ours but also finger brushes are available)
3. Pet toothpaste which is better appreciated then our mint taste tooth paste
4. Toys/bones which encourage chewing and massaging of gums
5. Specialties which help to improve bad breath, plaque build up delay

If you contact one of our Veterinarians or Nurses they will be happy to inform and advice you of the best suitable home care in your situation.

Just like humans, pets can live longer, healthier lives if oral health care is managed and maintained!

