



Dental Information



Why has my pet been recommended a dental?

Dental disease is the most common illness suffered by our pets. Dental disease is a progressive disease of the supporting tissues surrounding teeth and the main cause of bad breath, painful chewing and tooth loss.

Dental disease starts when bacteria combine with food particles to form plaque on the teeth. Minerals in the saliva bond with the plaque to form tartar, a hard substance that adheres to the teeth. Bacteria in the mouth work their way under the gums and cause gingivitis. Once under the gums, bacteria destroy the supporting tissue around the tooth. This condition is known as periodontitis.

Gingivitis and periodontitis make up the changes that are referred to as dental disease. The bacteria associated with dental disease can also travel in the bloodstream to the heart, kidneys, and liver.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A DENTAL?

Your pet will usually be admitted in the morning and discharged in the afternoon of the same day.

Once admitted, your pet will be given an anaesthetic. This allows us to treat the mouth with no stress and reduced risk of injury. The health of your pet's mouth is then assessed and will involve the removal of plaque and tartar. The surface of the teeth will be examined for any cracks, holes and 'neck lesions' in cats. The gums are examined for recession or deep pockets, the teeth will then be cleaned more thoroughly using an ultrasonic scaler – this is an instrument with a vibrating tip. Any necessary extractions will be carried out, teeth must be removed if they are loose or cracked.

Some cases will require x-rays to be taken to allow assessment of the roots under the gum, as these cannot be examined from the mouth.

In patients with advanced dental disease, the jaw bone can be weakened meaning there can be a risk of jaw fracture in some patients even with the gentlest of handling. It always makes sense to carry out dental treatment early!

The scaling procedure leaves small scratches on the surface of the tooth – these are great for allowing plaque to reattach. Therefore, polishing is carried out to smooth the surface of the now clean tooth.

Depending on what work has been necessary your pet may be discharged with antibiotics and/or painkillers.

We recommend soft food for 2 weeks following extractions to allow the gum to heal. During this time, it is important to avoid hard chews and toys!

PLEASE DO NOT FEED YOUR PET AFTER 11PM THE NIGHT BEFORE THEIR DENTAL AND LIFT THEIR WATER BOWL IN THE MORNING.

What are the benefits of a dental cleaning?

A professional dental cleaning removes not only the visible plaque and tartar on the teeth surfaces but also the bacteria under the gums. This eliminates potential sources of infection to the mouth and other organs and protects your pet from pain and tooth loss.

What can I do to keep my pet's teeth clean?

Once a dental cleaning has been performed you can take a number of steps at home to keep your pet's teeth clean and lengthen the intervals between dental cleanings. The most effective is brushing your pet's teeth daily using a brush and an enzymatic toothpaste. Please ask at reception if you would like a copy of our 'How to brush your pet's teeth' leaflet.

** Human toothpastes should be avoided because they contain ingredients that should not be swallowed by your pet.

Other plaque prevention products:

- Plaque Off: 100% natural product that you add to your pet's food daily.
- Vet Aquadent: Solution for cats that is added to their drinking water daily.
- Kong Dental Range: The Kong dental stick is designed to help remove plaque and food debris from a dog's mouth as he chews on it. Specially designed grooves close over teeth and gently clean and condition both teeth and gums, even those at the back of the mouth.

Several dental diets and treats can also help keep plaque and tartar to a minimum. The diets tend to have larger kibbles to provide abrasive action against the tooth surface when chewed or they may contain ingredients that help prevent tartar build up. We can recommend which diets or treats are appropriate for your pet and please remember to account for these in your pet's daily calorie allowance.

How do I know if my pet needs a dental?

Regular inspection of your pet's mouth is important to catch dental disease in the early stages. Tartar may appear as a brownish-gold build up on the teeth, close to the gumline. Redness or bleeding along the gumline may indicate gingivitis. Other signs of dental disease include:

- Bad breath
- Drooling
- Pawing at the mouth
- Difficulty chewing
- Loose or missing teeth

If you notice any of these signs in your pet, schedule an appointment with one of our vets.

We also offer FREE dental clinics with our nursing team.

