



Dental Assessment and Treatment

Based on recent physical exam, your pet has been scheduled for a Comprehensive Oral Health Assessment and Treatment Procedure. Your veterinarian has assessed your pet's teeth to the best of their ability at the exam and provided an estimate that reflects the extent of disease expected. However, once your pet is asleep and a full examination and x-rays are performed, the extent of disease may change. General anesthesia is essential for a proper tooth-by-tooth evaluation.

Dental Assessment and Treatment Procedure

Once your pet is under anesthesia, a full examination (charting) of the teeth will be performed. This includes visual examination and notation of gingivitis and tartar for every tooth, as well as probing to measure pockets between gum and tooth and to feel for loose or broken teeth. Your pet's entire mouth and throat will also be examined for any possible tumors or other abnormalities.

Dental x-rays will then be performed. Full mouth x-rays are always recommended on any small breed dog, older pets, brachycephalic (short snout) pets and all cats. X-rays can be performed as needed in larger breed dogs or young patient; however, full mouth x-rays can still be helpful in these patients if you are able to pursue them. X-rays show us what is happening below the gum and jaw line which does not always show on the surface (IE a tooth may not be loose, but an abscess may be found at the root on x-rays).

Once this full examination and x-rays are performed, your veterinarian will extract any diseased teeth. If there are options other than extraction or if a tooth is "borderline," your veterinarian may call you during the procedure to discuss options. Once all diseased teeth have been extracted or treated, your pet's teeth will be fully scaled and polished, just as your teeth are at your dentist. Fluoride and a barrier sealant are applied to protect the teeth for the time that your pet needs to heal. Your pet will then be awoken from anesthesia and monitored during recovery.

Complications

In most otherwise healthy patients, there are minimal risks involved in a Dental Treatment and Assessment. Potential risks of general anesthesia are present (see Anesthesia Information handout for more details). If your pet has severe dental disease, there may be some risks associated with long-standing damage. Severe disease around the upper canine teeth can cause a communication between the mouth and the nose (oronasal fistula). These can be difficult to heal. Your vet will thoroughly clean this area once the tooth is removed, but the gums sometimes "fail" in these areas and may require a second repair later on. In small dogs or cats, severe disease on the bottom jaw can weaken the bone. Jaw fracture is sometimes already present or may occur during the procedure in very damaged jaws.

Bleeding: Bleeding may occur for the first 1-3 days following dental extraction. This typically resolves on its own and should be minimal. Should excessive bleeding occur, please contact us immediately.

Recovery and Homecare

If your pet has not had any extractions, they will return to normal almost immediately, once the effects of anesthesia have worn off. If your pet has had extractions, they may seem painful for several days and you may notice blood in the mouth or in food or water bowls. Your pet will be provided with pain medication and both

pain and blood should improve day by day. If extractions were performed, you will be instructed to feed your pet soft food for at least 2 weeks and your pet will NOT be allowed to play with any toys during that time.

Once your pet has recovered from any extractions, continued home care is VITAL to your pet's continued oral health. Brushing and other modes of care will be discussed at your pet's dental recheck. Depending on your pet's age, breed and degree of dental disease prior to their procedure, your veterinarian will discuss how frequently they should have a Dental Assessment and Treatment. For most pets, yearly treatments are recommended, but this can be done less frequently with very diligent home care.

YOUR BEST FRIEND'S BEST FRIEND!

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