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## PET DENTAL PROPHYLAXIS (CLEANING) INFORMATION

Dental disease is one of the most common, most diagnosed, most recognized health problems of companion animals. As in humans, plaque and tartar builds up on teeth. This is formed by food particles and bacteria, which combine with saliva. If plaque is allowed to accumulate it eventually causes a variety of dental conditions from bad breath to tooth abscesses. Studies show that 85% of all pets over the age of three years have periodontal disease and need dental care.

### Signs of Oral and Dental Disease in Dogs and Cats Include:

- Bad Breath
- Loose teeth or teeth that are discolored or covered in tartar
- Shying away from you when you touch the mouth area
- Drooling or dropping food from the mouth
- Bleeding from the mouth
- Loss of appetite or loss of weight (this combination can result from diseases of many organs and early veterinary examination is important.

### Dental disease in pets causes many problems such as:

- Bad breath
- Infections spreading to internal organs (liver, kidney, heart)
- Mouth & gum pain
- Loss of teeth
- Future owner expense

With proper dental care including removal of early tartar formation and proper home care of the teeth, your pet will be healthier, live longer, and have better breath.

### Proper Dental Cleaning Procedures In Your Pet Include:

- Pre-Anesthetic Physical Examination
- Pre-Anesthetic Blood Profile Screening (optional but highly recommended, especially in older pets)

- Placement of an intravenous (IV) catheter and administration of IV fluids (optional but highly recommended, especially in older pets)
- Anesthesia & vital sign monitoring
- Ultrasonic scaling
- Teeth polishing to smooth surfaces after scaling
- Fluoride application to strengthen teeth & build resistance to new tartar
- Recovery hospitalization
- Oral antibiotics may be required depending upon the degree of dental disease

### Dental Grading

Upon evaluation of a pet's dental health they are assigned a dental disease grade based on a scale of 0 to 4. The degree of dental disease present influences our recommendations as far as treatments as well as the cost associated with those treatments.

- **Grade 0:** No plaque or gingivitis is present. Usually seen in young, healthy dogs and cats between 6 and 12 months of age.
- **Grade 1:** Mild gingivitis and plaque are seen.



This grade of dental health is often reversible with brushing and appropriate chewing.

- **Grade 2:** Mild to moderate tartar (mineralized plaque and bacteria) and gingivitis are present on multiple teeth. Gingivitis is usually reversible after professional scaling and polishing.



- **Grade 3:** Heavy tartar and periodontal disease with bone loss are seen. Oral pain is likely in these patients. Tooth lesions and fractures may be present under the tartar. Extractions are likely to be needed.



- **Grade 4:** Severe tartar, periodontal disease and oral pain are typically present. Tooth loss is imminent.



We are dedicated to providing quality health care for your pet at the most affordable fee. Just as in human medicine, it is much better to "prevent" problems rather than "treat" problems.

#### **ANESTHESIA FOR DENTAL PATIENTS**

Anesthesia is essential for veterinary dental procedures in order to ensure that the

procedure(s) can be completed successfully. Fear of general anesthesia is a concern voiced by many pet owners. However, the risks of chronic oral infection, incomplete cleaning, and an incomplete oral examination are greater than the risk of an anesthetic complication. Appropriately administered general anesthesia entails extremely low risk for the patient. This is a result of a combination of pre-anesthetic patient assessment (including blood tests), use of modern anesthetic agents, use of local anesthetic blocks (which minimizes the depth of general anesthesia needed), and the use of modern anesthetic monitoring equipment. Many patients are awake and standing within 30 minutes of their procedure and go home the same day. While no one can guarantee the outcome of any anesthetic event our staff strives to make your pet's anesthetic experience as safe as possible.

#### **WHAT IF EXTRACTIONS ARE NEEDED?**

Many pets require anesthesia before a thorough examination can be completed. The condition of each tooth must be evaluated before a decision is made as to the best course of treatment. Although no one likes surprises, it sometimes is impossible to give an accurate estimate before anesthesia. From an economic standpoint, it is much more economical to complete all needed dental procedures during the initial visit and anesthesia rather than having to schedule another

appointment with additional sedation required. It is also easier on your pet and avoids multiple anesthesia events.

#### **HOME CARE AFTER THE DENTAL PROPHY PROCEDURE.**

You will be provided with a detailed handout describing recommended home care at the time your pet is dismissed from our office. Most pets need to be kept quiet for 12 to 24 hours as the remainder of their anesthetic is metabolized out of their system. Those pets who have had extractions need to be kept quiet for 72 hours to prevent bleeding from the extraction site(s).

#### **PREVENTATIVE DENTAL CARE**

Prevention of future dental problems begins at home. Caring for your pet's teeth at home can reduce the frequency of professional care needed. Preventative home care can include the following:

- Brushing your pet's teeth with a veterinary toothpaste on a regular basis
- Use Hill's Prescription Diet T/d to help reduce plaque formation
- Use of antiseptic and antiplaque oral rinses such as Nolvadent
- Use of dental chews such as CET Chews® or Greenies®.