

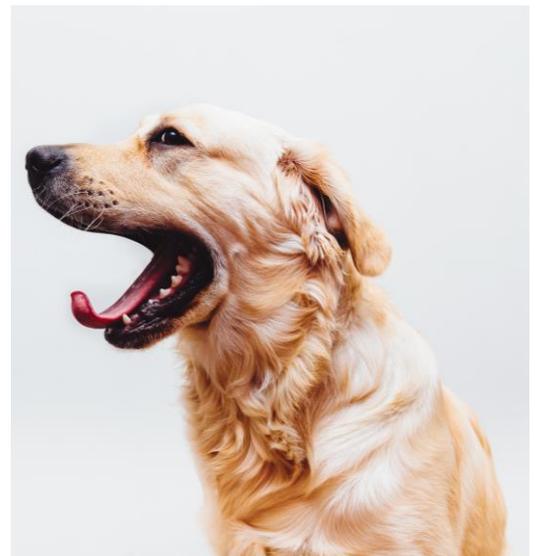
Dental Services

Dental disease is the most common infectious disease of adult cats and dogs, being present in 70% of cats and nearly 90% of dogs by the age of three.

Animals are likely to hide the signs of pain associated with dental disease, so you may be unaware that your pet has a problem. For this reason we offer free dental checks and will also examine your pets' teeth at routine health checks.

In addition to the discomfort caused by dental disease, the associated bacterial infection can also damage other tissues, including those of the heart and kidneys. These same bacteria are responsible for the smelly breath often associated with bad teeth.

The effects of dental disease on your pet can be vague and wide-ranging. We often find that owners find their cat or dog is "like a kitten/puppy" a week after their dental, highlighting the benefits of these procedures.



The Anaesthetic

Without the ability to ask (or bribe) our patients to sit still while we examine and treat the mouth properly, an anaesthetic is absolutely necessary. All anaesthetics carry an inherent risk, however modern anaesthetic agents are very safe and we routinely anaesthetise older patients for a variety of procedures.

For older animals we recommend a pre-anaesthetic blood test to screen for any underlying problems which, if identified, may require a change in the type of care provided.

Intravenous fluids to maintain kidney function during the anaesthetic are of benefit to all patients, particularly older pets, especially as extensive work may be required resulting in a prolonged anaesthetic time.

Dental Charting

Whilst our initial examination of your pet can provide a reasonable indicator of the degree of dental disease, until your pet is anaesthetised it is impossible to be sure of the extent of work required. Frequently, dental disease is a 'hidden' problem existing below the gum margin. Therefore the initial stage is to use probes to examine and 'chart' the disease-related changes to the gums and tooth roots. This information is recorded and used to determine the best course of action. Reversible change will be addressed by careful ultrasonic scaling and polishing of the teeth. More advanced change may necessitate extractions.

Extractions

Once dental problems are established the changes are irreversible, and extraction is recognised to be the most appropriate course of action for the resolution of advanced dental disease in the majority of cases. Therefore it may be necessary for us to extract multiple teeth.

Rest assured that we will not remove any teeth that do not require extraction, and that it is more comfortable to chew on a healthy gum than diseased teeth. Pets will happily crunch up biscuits as soon as the extraction sites are healed. We also ensure plenty of pain relief is provided, and antibiotics where indicated.

Costs

Good dental treatment is very time-consuming, requiring the attendance of a Vet and Nurse for at least an hour per patient and often considerably more. Whilst the cost of the anaesthetic, charting, scale and polish is predictable, the total cost will vary according to the number and type of extractions required.

A Dental Price List detailing the costs of different extractions is available from reception, and our vets and nurses will be happy to discuss any additional questions you may have.

The Way Forward

It is possible to prevent the development of dental disease at home. Various dental chews and diets exist, however there is no way to ensure that all the teeth benefit from these as pets may chew on one side only. Therefore the mainstay of home care is brushing. This is of course less of an option for cats!



We stock a number of brushes specifically designed for pets' teeth. We also supply a special toothpaste which is palatable to pets (mint generally isn't) and doesn't matter if it is swallowed. When introducing tooth-brushing, try to make it a positive experience by using short sessions to build up gradually to the full brushing experience, and reward with treats.

We offer free nurse appointments to help get you started.