

Dentistry

Dental cleaning, polishing, +/- extraction(s) under sedation

Name: _____ Date: _____

Dental prophylaxis, or routine dental cleanings, are a normal part of canine and feline dental health care - in fact, they are often a critical aspect of maintaining a healthy mouth! Dentistry can also treat some conditions, including but not limited to periodontal disease (tooth and gum disease, like gingivitis), tooth root abscessation (infection), fractured teeth, and feline stomatitis. Quite often, dogs and cats will be scheduled for a "routine" dental cleaning but in reality they have some stage of periodontal disease - 85% of adult pets have periodontal disease. Many pets should have dental cleanings at least annually, but this recommendation should be based on the need of the individual pet. The pain from periodontal disease can cause pets to feel run down or discourage them from eating. The increased bacteria loads trapped in the tartar associated with periodontal disease increases the risk for infection elsewhere in the body, like the digestive tract (from swallowing), respiratory tract (from breathing), kidneys, liver, and heart (from the bloodstream).

Complications of the procedure may include bleeding, swelling, and pain. Usually these complications are very minor and resolve within a few days or less. The degree of discomfort is usually much less than the pet was feeling prior to the dental cleaning. Other complications associated with anesthesia include short-term vomiting or diarrhea, ileus (decreased gut motility or decreased movement of food in the intestines), and death. The most common complications that we see involve post-dental minor gum irritation that clears up within a few days. Additional pain medication and antibiotics may be prescribed for your pet, depending on the stage of periodontal disease and other conditions.

During your pet's dental visit, it was given pain medication and antibiotics at the time of the dental procedure. The dental procedure was performed under appropriate anesthesia with an endotracheal tube placed to maintain its airway, protect from aspiration of saliva and blood (breathing fluid into lungs), and facilitate administration of gas anesthesia. Usually, the dental procedure includes a tooth-by-tooth examination and cleaning and polishing using instruments similar to what would be used in a human dentist's office. The ultrasonic scaler blasts away tartar and calculi (the hard, discolored material on the surface of the tooth) above and slightly below the gum line while polishing helps smooth away microscopic abrasions to reduce tartar's ability to adhere to teeth. Some minor gum bleeding and irritation may occur from the ultrasonic scaler. Occasionally, teeth that are loose, damaged, or have root abscess may be extracted. If such teeth are found during a dental procedure, a decision is made regarding extraction at the time of the procedure. It is painful - and often difficult with an awake patient - to evaluate such teeth when the patient isn't under sedation, so the number of teeth that may be extracted likely would not be known prior to the procedure in most cases. Generally, the extraction site is left open and hemostasis (stopping bleeding) is achieved by direct pressure; rarely, a gingival flap will be performed. A post-surgical laser treatment was also administered to your pet to reduce swelling and pain of the gums and promote healing since some degree of gingivitis is usually present.

Home Care Instructions

→ Dental cleanings under sedation may need to be done more frequently for some pets - like small breed dogs, older pets, and depending on other factors like genetics and diet. It is generally recommended that dogs and cats be evaluated for dental health at least annually.

→ The best prevention for periodontal disease is at-home brushing of the teeth.

→ It is usually not necessary to switch to soft/wet/canned food after a dental procedure, even with extractions, in most cases.

→ If there are any general signs of illness (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea, lack of energy, lack of appetite, fever (greater than 102.5), pale gums and/or mucous membranes), please do not hesitate to call. There may be mild vomiting or diarrhea for a day or so after anesthesia. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Thank you for bringing your pet to the Pickrell Veterinary Clinic
Quality Care You Can Count On!