

Pet Dental Care & Oral Health

Oral health is a fundamental aspect of our pet's overall well-being. By three years of age, most dogs and cats have some level of periodontal disease.

Dental tartar houses millions of bacteria that can infect tissue surrounding the tooth, causing inflammation that leads to gingivitis, gum recession, and/or infection (periodontal disease). Periodontal disease can lead to chronic pain and suffering in our beloved pets if left untreated. Fortunately, periodontal disease is preventable through regular dental exams, treatment, and proper at-home care.

DENTAL EXAMS: Your veterinarian will examine your pet's mouth at each visit to assess the level of tartar and determine if periodontal disease is present. Helpful treatments or planning for future dental cleanings may be recommended.

Anesthetic Dental Cleanings: An awake animal is unlikely to allow a veterinarian to poke around their mouth with dental instruments or remove all dental tartar. Anesthesia reduces the anxiety and pain that can accompany treating diseased teeth.

- A thorough anesthetized dental exam and x-rays may reveal problems that require immediate action and cannot be treated without anesthesia (e.g. extractions).
- Additional safety precautions include intravenous fluids, blood pressure monitoring, and placing a breathing tube to protect your pet's lungs and oxygen levels.

Non-Anesthetic Dental Cleanings: Cleaning pets' teeth without anesthesia can be helpful between dental anesthetic cleanings.

- While the pet is awake, we can scale large amounts of tartar outside the surface of the teeth and then polish them.
- Non-anesthetic cleanings should never replace the thorough cleaning that an anesthetic cleaning provides. X-rays cannot be performed on an animal that is not anesthetized.

At-Home Dental Care: Brushing daily is best, but try to brush their teeth at home at least three times a week. It's essential to get puppies and kittens used to having their teeth brushed so they're accustomed to it by the time their adult teeth have grown in. Dental chews, dental water additives, and dental wipes can supplement your pet's dental hygiene.

We recommend looking for products that have been approved and listed on the [Veterinary Oral Health Council \(VOHC\)](#) website.