



Post Operative Care and Prevention of Dental Disease

Today's dental surgery was performed under a full general anaesthetic.

Your pet may be sleepy and unsteady for the next 12-24 hours. During this period it is wise to avoid extremes of temperature and over-exercising.

Food should be soft, light and frequent according to appetite. Cats should be kept indoors with access to a litter tray for 24 hours. Some drool with blood in is expected and normal, no need to worry.

Please make an appointment with Ralf to recheck the teeth and gums in 2 weeks.

A dental scale and polish involves the removal of calculus / tartar (hard brown stony material) and plaque (soft paste-like material) from the crown and the sulcus area (under the gum line). Ultrasonic tips, which vibrate at 30,000 times a second, are used to clean these areas. The teeth are then polished smooth with a mechanical polisher. This helps slow down the reattachment of plaque.

Plaque is formed mainly from debris, oral bacteria and saliva proteins. It starts to attach to the teeth soon after the first meal and unless steps are taken to remove the plaque it will calcify to form calculus. The calculus is rough and full of bacteria and irritates the gums that then recede from the teeth. This opens up a gap between the tooth and the gum. Infection gets down into this gap and loosens the roots so in years to come we have to remove the tooth. The way to stop this sequence is to remove the plaque as soon as it forms.

Methods of removing plaque

Brushing

Regular brushing is the best method for cats and dogs teeth as it is for our own. There are differences however. Brushes must be softer than human ones as the enamel on your pets' teeth is thinner than our own, and is more easily damaged. They also need special toothpaste, as they do not spit it out but swallow it instead. Fluoride, which is found in human preparations, will not be metabolised by your pet and may cause irritation to the liver. The current recommendation is that pets teeth need to be brushed at least 3 times a week, ideally everyday, for the best results. A nurse can provide a demonstration on request.

Special diets

These are specially designed to rub the plaque off. The individual pieces of food are made more fibrous so they do not shatter when bitten, instead the tooth penetrates and as it does so the deposits of plaque are rubbed off the sides of the tooth. For animals where brushing cannot be carried out, (eg. some cats) this is the next best method of preventing plaque build up.

Oral hygiene gels

These are applied either directly to the mouth or to the food. They give some of the antibacterial effects of toothpaste but obviously cannot give the physical effect.

Dental Toys

These can give some of the mechanical cleaning effect but tend to be chewed in the same part of the mouth all the time so their effect is limited.

Please note dental treatments are just providing relief for the problem with the mouth today. Some pets may require dental scales and polishes annually to remove tartar in order to prevent the need for more extractions.

We recommend a check up every 6 months to allow early identification of dental disease.