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ASK THE VET...

- What kind of anesthesia do you use? (Propofol with Iso- or Sevoflourine is preferred)
- Is the animal on monitoring equipment while under anesthesia? (should be Yes)
- What kind of training does the cleaning technician have? (certification is preferred)
- Is the person extracting teeth licensed to do so? (vet or licensed tech)
- Do you offer dental x-rays? (Yes)
- How do you oversee the cleaning? Are you inspecting the teeth yourself before cleaning starts? If you have a vet tech doing the cleaning are you readily available to assist them? (Yes)

PET DENTAL CARE

WHY DENTAL CARE IS IMPORTANT

Too many owners don't take a regular look inside their pet's mouth. When dental care is ignored, tooth and gum disease can cause pain, as well as contribute to infections in important organs (heart, liver, kidney). Dogs and cats instinctually hide pain, so a cracked tooth may not elicit the kind of reaction it would in us. Regular dental care can add years to your pet's life.

WHEN ARE ANESTHESIA-FREE CLEANINGS AN APPROPRIATE OPTION?

Anesthesia-free dental cleanings are appropriate for dogs and cats with minor tarter buildup. Young dogs or cats just getting started with dental cleanings are excellent candidates. They are also appropriate for upkeep, when your pet get's regular veterinary care but seems to collect tarter more quickly on a few of their teeth. Always inquire about the background of the technician – they should have specialized training.

It is NOT appropriate for animals with severe dental disease. If your pet's teeth are covered in tarter and/or their gums are red, you should have them seen by a vet.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A VET PROVIDING DENTAL CARE

Do your homework when deciding where to take your pet for dental care. The "Ask the Vet" questions should be included in your conversation. Some vets offer both anesthesia and non-anesthesia cleanings, which is the best of both worlds. The vets themselves rarely do the cleaning, so be sure the technician is properly trained in dental cleaning. A basic cleaning should include gum pocket probing, and sometimes x-rays (to find hidden problems). Don't be put off by the requirement of a blood test because it is an important way to see if there are hidden risks for their care. The vet should always be available to assist in the cleaning if needed.

LEARN TO BRUSH YOUR PET'S TEETHS AND EXAMINE THEIR MOUTH

You should be paying daily attention to your pet's mouth. Spend time getting your pet used to having their mouth touched before diving in with a brush and paste (always use PET products, never human). Short sessions coupled with treats can really help the process, but you can get the help of a trainer to show you how to acclimate a more difficult pet.

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PRODUCTS

- Leba III Spray
- PetzLife Spray
- PetzLife Gel
- True Blue Dental Wipes
- Virbac CET toothpaste
- Shake Organic Pet Mouth Cleanser
- Vet's Best Dental Gel

First just use your index finger in the mouth, rubbing gently on the gum line. Then wrap gauze around your finger and repeat the process. Introduce the brush without paste first, then add the paste (let them taste it first). Each step may take several short sessions. Don't worry about brushing the inner surface of their teeth; their saliva keeps things clean there. You need to brush the outer surface, especially way in the back. Get a look at their gums too, so you'll recognize an unusual growth when it's small.

DEXTER SUGGESTS



Don't delay. If you suspect your pet is having dental trouble, have them examined by a vet.

Dogs, and especially cats, may try to hide their pain. An early indicator is a change in eating behavior or an apprehension to chew.

Toy breeds need early and consistent care because they are more prone to dental problems.

