

# Dental treatment: things you need to know



## Before coming to hospital

Most dental procedures can be performed in a single day, with your pet coming to hospital in the morning and returning home that evening. Some patients may need to stay overnight for ongoing supportive treatment and pain relief. Although some dentistry may be performed under sedation, the majority is performed while your pet is fully asleep, under a general anaesthetic.

The cost of dental treatment depends on the time taken to perform the procedure. Whilst we endeavor to give you a comprehensive estimate at the time of consultation it is often difficult to examine your pet's mouth while they are conscious, so the scope of dental treatment may not be known until the teeth have been thoroughly cleaned and examined under anaesthetic. We can call you with an updated estimate, if required, once your pet has been fully examined.

If your pet is going to have a general anaesthetic, please withhold food on the day of surgery, with the exception of rabbits and pocket pets. Water is ok.

## Hair clipping

Hair may be clipped from the underside of the neck and from the legs to allow access to the veins to take blood samples or to give medication and fluids.

## Admission time

An admission appointment will be made, usually between 8am and 9am. The admission process will take approximately 10 minutes and will include signing an admission form detailing the treatment to be undertaken and the method of payment for when you collect your pet.

Once your pet's procedure has been completed we will contact you to schedule a discharge appointment. During this appointment a nurse will go through the home care instructions for your pet. Please be sure to give us full contact details so we can reach you during the day.

## Intravenous fluids

Your pet will receive intravenous fluids during surgery to help maintain their blood pressure and circulation to their body's tissues and organs. Good circulation is vital for healing.

## Pre-anaesthetic blood tests

We can perform a pre-anaesthetic blood profile that checks your pet's basic health status.

Although we highly recommend this for all patients over 7 years, it is useful information to have for any patient. It is best to know in advance if an underlying condition is present and it gives us baseline values in case of post operative complications.

Please indicate on the admission form if you would like this done for your pet.

## During Anaesthesia & Dentistry

Your pet's safety and comfort are paramount, so to help ensure a successful outcome we use new and safer anesthetic agents as well as top quality materials.

Our highly trained staff use specialised equipment to monitor you pet's anaesthetic during their procedure and in the post anaesthetic or surgery period. Your pet will be kept warm at all times for their comfort and to aid their healing.

### Pain relief

Pre and post operative pain relief are routinely given to maintain your pet's comfort. Depending on the procedure, on going medication may be dispensed to be given to your pet at home.

### What to expect at home

Your pet will probably be given sedation prior to their anaesthetic and so may be drowsy for up to 24 hours after surgery. Make sure your pet is kept in a warm environment and given assistance if required to go to the toilet.

Your pet may not feel like eating on the day of surgery, but we would like them to start eating by the next day. If there have been tooth extractions it is best to give food that is soft but not mushy e.g. mince balls or small pieces of chicken or fish. A small amount of bleeding from your pet's mouth may occur.



For after hours  
emergency services  
please call Animal

Emergency Service on  
0427 025 073



## Maintaining healthy teeth & gums

The majority of dog and cat dental problems are due to periodontal disease of the tissues surrounding and supporting the teeth. The major causes of periodontal disease are plaque and calculus. Dental plaque is a film of bacteria and food particles, and calculus is a hard mineralised substance which forms on the teeth when the plaque reacts with the mouth's saliva.

Together they cause inflammation and infection of the gums and deeper tissues surrounding the teeth.

Once calculus has formed, your pet will require an anaesthetic to have their teeth thoroughly cleaned. If left untreated, teeth eventually loosen due to gum inflammation and may require extraction.

Minimising dental plaque in your pet's mouth keeps the gums healthier and can greatly reduce the need for anaesthetics and dental treatments. Your vet can help you with strategies that reduce plaque and calculus which may include dietary options, regular teeth cleaning at home or antibacterial rinses or sprays applied to the mouth. Examination of the teeth is part of our annual health check but your vet may arrange more frequent visits to check the effectiveness of plaque control measures.

