

West Oaks Dental Info Sheet

Dental Disease is the most commonly reported disease of adult dogs and cats. In fact, by age three 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have clinical evidence of oral disease.

Why are regular dental treatments important for my pet?

Dogs and Cats, like people, need regular dental care. Serious oral health problems can be addressed and prevented when you have your pet's teeth professionally treated at a veterinary hospital on a regular basis.

Dental disease begins with plaque, a soft, colorless, sticky film that results from the combination of food debris, bacteria, and saliva. If plaque is not removed, it mineralizes and forms into calculus. You may have noticed this hard material on your pet's teeth. If plaque and calculus are allowed to build up and are not removed, they can lead to gingivitis, an inflammation of the gum line, which is painful for your pet. It also encourages bacterial toxins to form along the gum line. At this stage, gingivitis is reversible with professional dental care and regular brushing.

If gingivitis is left untreated, periodontal disease, a process that causes breakdown of the teeth's supporting structures, will result. This will cause oral pain, loose teeth, decreased appetite, and more severe oral infection. As periodontal disease progresses, the gums recede, allowing bacteria to travel through the bloodstream to other parts of the body. These bacteria can cause disease in the heart, liver, and kidneys.

Stage 1: Here is a health mouth with normal bacterial flora, sound gums, and minimal plaque buildup.



Stage 2: Early dental disease appears as inflammation, swelling and moderate halitosis.



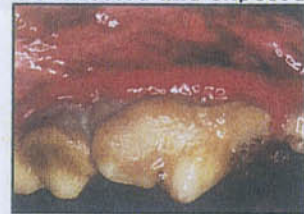
Signs of oral disease include:

- Red, swollen, or bleeding gums
- Pus along gum lines & around teeth
- Loose, broken, or abscessed teeth
- Receding gums
- Persistent bad breath
- Loss of appetite
- Pawing at the mouth
- Darkened, yellowish, brownish stained teeth
- Excessive drooling
- Sensitivity around the mouth

Stage 3: Established dental disease appears as pustular discharge, receding gums, root exposure, plaque buildup, bleeding, and halitosis.



Stage 4: Advanced dental disease appears as bleeding gingival, mobile teeth, tooth loss, halitosis, roots are infected and exposed.



What is involved with a dental cleaning for my pets?

To perform a thorough, safe, and comfortable dental procedure, your pet must be anesthetized. To help ensure your pet's safety during treatment, we use the safest anesthetic agents available. A technician will continually monitor your pet's temperature, pulse, respiration, and other vital functions throughout the procedure until recovery from anesthesia. Because safety is our primary concern, our surgical suite and laboratory are equipped with several diagnostic instruments to assist us in monitoring your pet's condition at all times. Depending on our assessment of your pet's mouth during physical examination, we may recommend several types of testing, including complete blood count, health profile screen, and other diagnostics to further reduce anesthetic risk.

Once under anesthesia, we will thoroughly examine your pet's teeth, gums, lips, tongue, and throat. Each tooth is checked for calculus, cavities, fractures, looseness, infection, or other problems that may cause pain or threaten your pet's health. Tooth scaling will be performed both by hand and using ultrasonic cleaning equipment to remove tartar both above and below the gum line. The teeth are then polished in order to help prevent subsequent plaque build-up. It may be necessary to carry out other procedures at this time such as extractions, and special application of fluoride to decrease tooth sensitivity and to strengthen tooth enamel.

These procedures will be fully discussed at your pet's dental appointment. We will need a telephone number where you can be reached during the dental cleaning so that we can discuss any additional work that may be indicated once we begin. In most cases this is just a day procedure, please speak to our front desk to schedule an appointment.