



## Miramonte Veterinary Hospital

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### Recommended Pet Dental Care

In an effort to promote and maintain optimum oral and overall physical health for your pet, our practice recommends annual to bi-annual dental prophylaxis (cleaning) and periodontal treatment, as warranted. The frequency of this procedure varies with each case and depends upon the presence and involvement of disease. If your pet has bad breath, then gingival (gum) disease is most likely present. Fortunately, in most cases, it is reversible and can usually be treated. The gingiva has a good blood supply, which enables bacteria to easily enter the blood stream. Many systemic diseases can occur from these circulating bacteria, such as kidney infection, hepatitis (liver infection), pancreatitis, bladder infection, and infection of the heart valves. Gingival disease is not the only source of these problems, but taking steps to prevent them is far easier than curing them. A dental prophylaxis today can help save your pet from serious illnesses later in life, as well as contribute to longevity.

The teeth are scaled using an ultrasonic scaler, which removes plaque and calculus (tartar) from the crown surface. To remove debris subgingivally (beneath the gum line), hand instruments are used. In order to facilitate the removal of unwanted bacteria and reduce infection, a mixture of chlorhexidine solution and water is used during the entire cleaning process. The teeth will then be polished and rinsed to result in a cleaner, healthier mouth, and ultimately lessen bad breath.

Once your pet reaches five years of age, to establish and continually monitor the underlying condition of his/her teeth, we also recommend annual dental radiographs (x-rays). These films enable us to view the bone structure and condition of the teeth below the gum line; something we are unable to see upon physical oral examination. As the patient ages, and/or the level of periodontal disease progresses, so does the involvement of the teeth and bones. The treatment given your pet based on the information gained from the radiographs will be more complete, and inevitably prove beneficial.

In order to fully determine the condition of your pet's mouth, and to perform these procedures, your pet will need to be under general anesthesia. To act in his/her best interest, we will perform pre-anesthetic blood work to assess proper organ function and insure your pet's optimum health status prior to administering anesthesia. The necessary lab work (send out profiles, "in hospital" profiles, additional tests such as thyroid testing, chest radiographs, etc.) is on a per case basis, and will be discussed with you prior to being run.

We do not recommend having your pet's teeth handscaled without anesthesia. Using hand instruments can cause scratches in the enamel, which would normally be buffed away with the polishing treatment. Furthermore, your pet needs to be completely still in order to safely and adequately clean and probe around the gumline. Periodontal damage and systemic disease are not caused by calculus on the crown of the tooth, but by calculus and bacteria under the gumline. Only with thorough examination and radiographs under anesthesia can we determine the full extent of your pet's dental disease and the best course of treatment.

Our practice recommends all of the treatments mentioned due to the potential health risks associated with periodontal disease. Pets generally do not exhibit and cannot vocalize signs of discomfort or pain until these symptoms are severe. Our goal is to minimize and/or prevent problems before they reach this point.

Our staff is available to answer any questions and address your concerns regarding your pet's oral and overall health. Upon your request, an estimate of charges can be compiled and presented prior to the administration of any proposed treatments.