

February 2022

## Dental Cleanings

What is that foul odor coming from your pet's mouth? How do you get that brown tartar off your pet's teeth? February is dental awareness month. Let's talk more about dental cleanings!

### What Does a Dental Procedure Involve?

Brushing your pet's teeth or dental foods/treats can help prevent tartar formation. But what if that thick, brown tartar has already formed on your pet's teeth? Once severe dental disease is present, simple brushing or dental treats will not be enough to get rid of the tartar. At this point, it may be time for your pet to go to the veterinarian for a dental procedure.

But what is a dental procedure? A dental involves scraping off all the tartar that has built up on your pet's teeth. This removes all bacteria and infection from your pet's mouth. Once all the tartar is scraped off, the tooth and the gingiva (gum) can be more closely inspected. Oftentimes, dental x-rays are performed to help take a look at the tooth underneath the gumline as well. At this point, if a tooth is determined to be damaged beyond repair, it can be extracted, or removed. Once all the remaining teeth are cleaned, they are polished, just like a human dentist!

Because most animals won't allow a good oral examination while awake, dental procedures must be performed with general anesthesia. Because of this, bloodwork is performed prior to the procedure to make sure that the patient's liver, kidneys, and other organs are healthy enough to undergo anesthesia. Depending on if there are other medical issues, other pre-anesthetic diagnostics may be performed, such as an EKG and/or chest x-rays.



Having good dental health is extremely important in making sure your pet stays healthy! If your pet has issues with dental disease, or if you have questions about the dental procedure, feel free to give your veterinarian a call!

Best regards,  
*Rachel Rielinger, DVM*



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