

Maintaining your pet's oral health is essential for their overall well-being. Dental disease can lead to pain, infection, tooth loss and even affect the heart, liver and kidneys. This information sheet describes what to expect before, during and after your pet's dental procedure.

Why Dental Care Is Important

- **Dental disease starts under the gums.** Research shows that oral disease processes begin below the gum line, where tartar and bacteria accumulate unseen. Without treatment, periodontal disease can damage bone and lead to loose or painful teeth.
- **Digital dental radiographs show what we can't see.** X-rays allow us to view the internal structure of each tooth—the roots and surrounding bone. Many conditions (like infected or fractured roots, resorptive lesions and bone loss) are invisible during an awake exam.
- **Regular cleanings prevent disease.** Annual dental exams and cleanings help remove plaque and tartar, prevent infection and detect problems early.

What Happens During a Dental Procedure

1. **General anesthesia.** Pets will not hold still for the thorough cleaning and examination required. General anesthesia allows us to perform a complete oral exam and cleaning while keeping your pet comfortable. We use only the safest anesthetic protocols and continually monitor vital signs.
2. **Comprehensive examination.** Under anesthesia we are able to fully examine the oral cavity along with each tooth. **Dental radiographs** are taken at this time to evaluate the roots and bone. A dental chart records findings and treatments.
3. **Scaling and polishing.** Ultrasonic and hand instruments remove plaque and tartar from above and below the gum line. Polishing smooths the tooth surfaces to slow future plaque buildup. The mouth is flushed to remove debris.
4. **Treatment of problem teeth.** If radiographs or probing reveal diseased teeth or other abnormalities, extractions or periodontal treatments may be necessary. We will contact you before performing any additional procedures, unless you direct otherwise. In some cases, referral to a dental specialist may be advised.
5. **Pain management and recovery.** Local anesthetic blocks and pain medications keep your pet comfortable. We monitor heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen and carbon-dioxide levels throughout the procedure. Your pet will go home the same day in most cases.



NEWPORT HARBOR ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Pet Dental Procedure Information Sheet

Preparing for Your Pet's Dental Procedure

- **Fasting:** Please withhold food after midnight the night before the procedure. Water may be offered until early morning unless instructed otherwise.
- **Medications:** Give medications as directed unless we instruct you to skip them the morning of the procedure. Inform us of any supplements or medications your pet is taking.
- **Pre- anesthetic testing:** Blood tests help identify underlying conditions and are required. Comprehensive blood panels are strongly recommended for senior pets. Chest x-rays are recommended for our geriatric pets.
- **Arrive on time:** Bring your pet to the hospital at the scheduled admission time. Allow a few minutes for paperwork.
- **Contact information:** Provide a phone number where you can be reached **immediately**. Decisions about extractions or additional treatments may need to be made quickly while your pet is under anesthesia. Delays in reaching you can prolong anesthesia or lead to postponed treatments.

What to Expect After the Procedure

- Your pet may be sleepy or slightly uncoordinated for several hours. Keep them warm and in a quiet area.
- Offer small amounts of water when you arrive home. Feed a small meal later in the day unless instructed otherwise. Soft food may be recommended if extractions were performed.
- Monitor the mouth for bleeding or swelling. Some drooling is normal, or pink tinged saliva if extractions were performed, but contact us if you notice significant bleeding, refusal to eat, or signs of pain.
- Do not brush your pet's teeth until the gums have healed after extractions (usually 7 to 14 days). Our staff will advise you on home dental care, including brushing techniques and dental diets.
- Schedule any recommended recheck appointments.

Questions?

Our team is here to ensure your pet receives the best dental care possible. If you have questions before or after your pet's procedure, please call us at (949) 631-1030. Thank you for entrusting us with your pet's health!