



Main Street Veterinary Hospital
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Dear Pet Owner,

With the addition of the advanced dentistry department to our hospital, we have had many questions asked about the difference between dental care “then and now.” We would like to take this opportunity to share some of those questions and answers with you.

- **Why is dental care being approached differently now than in the past?**

Just as in human medicine, we are continually learning and advancing. Studies have shown a strong link between dental health and the length and quality of your pet’s life. The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) recently released its newest guidelines for dental care and, as an AAHA-accredited hospital we have enhanced our dentistry program to exceed their standards.



- **Is there a benefit to just cleaning the crowns of the teeth (the part of the tooth that is seen)?**

Maybe, but **only if** a tooth-by-tooth examination of the mouth is also performed. Dental x-rays should be taken, each tooth should be probed, and a treatment plan should be formulated for addressing periodontal disease or other dental problems either at that time, or at a later date.

- **What is periodontal disease?**

Periodontal disease is the result of inflammation caused by plaque. It leads to the destruction of the structures that support the tooth. Symptoms to watch for in your pet include gingivitis (redness of the gums) and mouth odor. Because pets often show no outward signs of periodontal disease, routine oral examinations are necessary for your pet’s health. Periodontal disease is the most common disease seen in dogs and cats.



Gingivitis

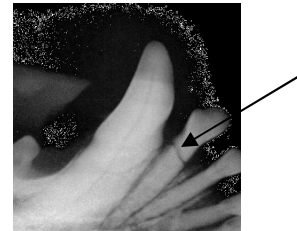


Dental Tartar / Infection

- **Is there a benefit to repeatedly cleaning the crowns without addressing periodontal disease?**
No. According to Dr. Jan Bellows, a board-certified Veterinary Dentist, cleaning the crowns without treating underlying dental problems is of no benefit to your pet. Cleaning the crowns neither treats dental disease nor stops the disease process. In fact, repeated cleanings in pets affected with periodontal disease may cause further damage to the teeth and surrounding structures.
- **My pet's teeth look fine: why are dental x-rays necessary?**
Remember that approximately 75% of each tooth is below the gumline where it cannot be seen. Without dental x-rays, it is impossible to know if there is disease in that part of the tooth. A tooth can look perfectly normal and yet be causing your pet much pain. X-rays also allow us to assess the health of the bone socket that supports the tooth.



An x-ray can reveal hidden problems, like this fracture, in a tooth which appears healthy.



- **I received a quote from another hospital for a dental cleaning for \$200, but Main Street Veterinary Hospital's quote was higher. Why is there such a difference in fees between hospitals?**
We cannot speak for other hospitals, but we suggest you ask the following questions:
 - Do you have the capability to do dental x-rays?
 - If yes, is the x-ray unit a digital unit? (digital units require your pet to be under anesthesia for a shorter period of time)
 - If no, how do you check the health of the tooth roots and bone?
 - Are dental x-rays included in the price?
 - Does the doctor examine my pet's mouth and probe each tooth?
 - Who monitors the anesthesia?
 - Do you use local anesthesia to numb my pet's mouth during painful dental procedures?
 - Will I receive a treatment plan for periodontal disease or other dental conditions?
 - What options do you offer for treating diseased teeth other than removing them?

Our knowledgeable team will be happy to answer any questions you may have about your pet's dental health. If you have not had the opportunity to meet our staff, we would love to meet you and your pet. Bring this letter in for a complimentary dental consult (\$52 value). Please call to schedule an appointment.

Sincerely,

The Main Street Veterinary Hospital Team

View AAHA Dental Care Guidelines at: www.aahanet.org/about_aaha/about_guidelines_dental.html