

Loudoun Cat Care

Dental Prophylaxis Overview

Dental prophylaxis is the term used for routine scaling and polishing of teeth. The procedure consists of a six part prophy which is used to help prevent and protect from periodontal disease. It is estimated that 85-95% of all cats over 2 years of age have periodontal disease present.

Signs of periodontal disease include mouth odor and inflamed gums. In more severe stages of periodontal disease your cat may drool, have bloody salivary discharge or refuse to eat dry food or drink cold water. A cat may continue to eat even when experiencing discomfort, so it is important for owners to check their cat's mouth on a regular basis. If oral pain is severe your cat may change the way he or she eats and often may become irritable.

If periodontal disease remains untreated for long periods of time, your cat's overall health can be seriously undermined. Bacteria that originate in the mouth can travel to other areas of the body, such as the heart, kidneys or joints. Advances in oral home care products as well as new technology have made dental disease preventable and treatable. After a dental prophylaxis, gingival bacteria populations are reduced which decreases the incidence of gingivitis and periodontitis. Routinely, a dental prophylaxis should be performed yearly and in some rare cases, every 6 months.

The Procedure

Prior to your cat's dental procedure, he or she will receive a pre-operative exam by the veterinarian. At this time the veterinarian will review pre-operative blood work results to look for any abnormalities that may contraindicate anesthesia.

During your cat's dental procedure he or she will be placed under general anesthesia for the entire procedure. Licensed personnel will be present all times during the anesthetic period, including a Veterinarian, a Licensed Veterinary Technician (who is also a qualified Veterinary Dental Technician) and a trained Veterinary Assistant. An inhaled gas anesthetic will be delivered via an endotracheal tube, which forms a seal to protect the lungs from water and bacteria that are aerosolized during the procedure. Vital signs (EKG and heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, temperature, oxygen saturation and expired CO₂) are monitored and recorded every 5 minutes during the anesthetic period. Once your cat has reached the proper plane of anesthesia, a complete set of whole mouth radiographs are taken. This helps to identify the health of the tooth roots and pinpoint any abnormalities (such as Feline Oral Resorptive Lesions, or "cavities") that cannot be seen above the gum line. Next the gum line is explored and curetted (hand scaled) to carefully remove hidden debris. Scaling with an ultrasonic scaler then follows with polishing by a rotary polisher. The last step is applying a fluoride gel to seal and

protect the teeth. Any severely infected, loose or broken teeth are treated or extracted by the veterinarian.

Recovery

After recovery from anesthesia, your cat is offered water and a light meal. Once awake enough to stand and walk about safely, he or she can be discharged, typically in the afternoon (1-5 pm). If your cat has had any extractions, he or she will be sent home with pain medication. This is typically an oral liquid that is administered twice daily for a few days post procedure. If you have trouble medicating your cat orally, please let us know and we can administer an injectable long-acting pain medication at the veterinarian's discretion. Any patient that has had extractions is encouraged to schedule a dental recheck appointment at no additional cost in 10-14 days post procedure. This allows us to confirm proper healing of the extraction sites.

If requested, we have included an itemized dental estimate for your review. Please understand that this estimate is based on what is visualized while your cat is awake during his or her physical exam. It is not unusual for our dental team to identify additional teeth that are diseased once we have taken radiographs and have full access to the anesthetized patient's oral cavity.

Pre-Surgical Instructions

- Our staff will call to confirm your appointment the day prior to the procedure.
- Remove all food at 12 AM the night before your cat's procedure. Water is allowed up until the time of drop off.
- Without using food, administer all regular medications.
- You may be given an oral medication called Cerenia to give the evening before your cat's dental procedure. Please note: this medication is labeled for use in dogs only. Do not be alarmed by this. Cerenia has been used in feline medicine over many years "off label" and is safe and effective in the cat. Cerenia has anti nausea and anti inflammatory properties that help minimize nausea caused by certain routinely used anesthetics and reversal agents. If you do not administer Cerenia orally to your cat, an injectable form will be given by our staff on the morning of the procedure.
- Using Feliway in the cat carrier may help reduce your cat's stress from the car ride to the clinic.
- Drop off the morning of the procedure at 8:00 AM.
- If you wish to have any additional services provided (microchip, comb out, sani shave, etc), please let our staff know at the time of drop off.