PRE-OPERATIVE INFORMATION

Preparing for a Dental Procedure

> This page explains what's different about dental anesthesia, how we handle decisions about extractions, and what to expect on the day of your pet's dental. Please read this along with our general surgery information, since the same anesthesia risks and safety measures apply.

Why Dental Procedures Need Anesthesia

A proper dental assessment and cleaning requires general anesthesia — it isn't possible to safely or thoroughly examine every tooth, take dental X-rays, or clean below the gumline in an awake patient. Anesthesia allows us to do a complete job: probing each tooth, X-raying the roots, and cleaning both above and below the gumline where dental disease actually lives.

If Extractions Are Needed

During dental procedures, we often don't know whether a tooth needs to be extracted until dental X-rays are completed under anesthesia. Whenever possible, we call to discuss our findings and get your permission before proceeding with any extractions.

However, if we're unable to reach you by phone, any delay in proceeding can increase the risks associated with prolonged time under anesthesia. For this reason, your consent form will ask you to decide in advance what you'd prefer in this situation — whether the veterinarian should proceed with a needed extraction if they can't reach you, or leave the tooth in question for a future visit.

ℹ You'll need to be reachable by phone on the day of your pet's dental, in case we need to discuss findings or get your input before proceeding.

Why Dental Estimates Can Change

It's very difficult to provide a precise estimate for a dental procedure ahead of time, since hidden problems are often only discovered once your pet is under anesthesia and we've taken X-rays. The cost may change depending on what we find. As above, we'll always try to call you to discuss anything that may affect the estimate and to get your consent before proceeding with any unanticipated work.

Pre-Anesthetic Bloodwork

As with any anesthetic procedure, we offer pre-anesthetic bloodwork to help identify problems that may not be obvious on a physical exam. See our general surgery page for what these tests check and current pricing.

⚠ **Important for dentals specifically:** if you'd like pre-anesthetic bloodwork done, it must be arranged in advance — we are not able to offer same-day bloodwork for dental procedures except in very limited circumstances. Our dental surgery spots are in high demand, and same-day results showing a concern could mean cancelling the procedure on short notice. Please call us ahead of time to book this as a separate technician appointment.

What to Expect on the Day

1. **Drop-off and assessment**
   Our team will check your pet in and confirm any last details before anesthesia.

2. **Full oral exam and X-rays**
   Under anesthesia, we probe each tooth and take dental X-rays to assess what's happening below the gumline — this is when extraction needs usually become clear.

3. **Cleaning and any necessary treatment**
   We clean above and below the gumline, and perform any extractions or other treatment needed based on what we find — contacting you first whenever possible.

4. **Recovery**
   Your pet is monitored until fully awake. We'll call you to discuss how things went and arrange pick-up.

Dental disease is one of the most common health issues we see, and treating it makes a real difference to your pet's comfort and overall health. If you have any questions about the procedure, the cost, or what to expect, please don't hesitate to reach out before your pet's appointment.

Concerned About Cost?

We never want cost to stand in the way of your pet getting the care they need. If you'd like to explore pet insurance or payment plan options, see our financing options page.