



Fear Free Veterinary Care For Your Furry Friends. That's Franklin Farm.

Why are Dental Cleaning and Oral Health Exams Important?

Written by Wanda Hudgins, LVT, CVPM, CCFP

When was the last time you looked in your pet's mouth? Pets often go for months and even years with painful gingivitis, fractured teeth or severe tooth root abscess without noticeable clinical signs. Proper dental care can potentially add years of life and happiness to your pet.

After your pet eats a meal, plaque begins to accumulate on the teeth within four hours. Plaque, a slimy biofilm, consists of bacteria, saliva, and food particles. If plaque is not removed with regular home dental care, the bacteria will mineralize and form a yellow-brown substance seen on the teeth called tartar.

When tartar is visible, the damage has already started. Bacteria present in tartar secrete enzymes that cause damage to the teeth, gums, and jaw bones. Painful conditions such as gingivitis and periodontal disease can become irreversible without treatment and result in tooth loss. To prevent or treat these conditions the teeth must be evaluated and cleaned by a veterinary professional. Our goal is to prevent tartar build up, inflamed gums, and tooth loss by instructing pet parents about proper oral home care and regular oral veterinary exams.

Why is dental care so important to you and your pet? Dental disease is the most common illness encountered in veterinary medicine and affects 8 out of 10 pets. It is also the most preventable disease with proper home care. Preventative dental care including tooth brushing, dental chews, prescription dental diets, and regular veterinary examinations can improve your pet's quality and length of life. Unfortunately, many pets go untreated and suffer the consequences of infection, pain and decreased life span.

Pets often go years with painful gingivitis, periodontal disease, fractured teeth, or tooth root abscesses without you ever knowing this has occurred.

Dental disease puts tremendous stress on your pet's organs and can lead to infections in the liver, lungs, kidneys, and heart.

What is involved in a comprehensive oral health exam, teeth cleaning and oral surgery?

- 1) **Pre-anesthetic Bloodwork:** This can detect any abnormalities in organ function to tailor our anesthetic and pain drug protocol to your pet. Sometimes we find abnormalities that necessitate delaying the procedure until other health concerns are addressed.
- 2) **Intravenous (IV) Catheter and Fluid Therapy:** An IV catheter allows us to give injectable drugs for immediate effect and in cases of emergencies. IV fluids help us maintain proper body temperature and blood pressure which is vital for protecting the internal organs. Both the catheter and fluids dramatically increase the safety of the anesthesia.

- 3) **Anesthesia and Anesthetic Monitoring:** During an anesthetic procedure, your pet is intubated with a breathing tube to provide oxygen and inhalant anesthesia gas to allow quick recovery. Additionally, your pet's heart rate, heart rhythm, respiratory rate, blood pressure, blood oxygen level, EKG, carbon dioxide concentration and temperature are monitored electronically and by a veterinary technician continuously throughout the procedure.
- 4) **Comprehensive Oral Health Exam:** The veterinarian identifies any gingival pockets, masses, or diseased teeth in the mouth and prepares a chart to be kept in the pet's medical record.
- 5) **Dental Radiographs (X-rays):** Many dental disease conditions cannot be properly diagnosed or treated without taking radiographs of the tooth roots. Having dental radiographs allows us to make informed decisions about tooth treatment options.
- 6) **Dental Scaling:** Tartar and plaque below the gum line causes the most destruction to oral tissues. Our ultrasonic scaler is designed to clean tartar and plaque from the teeth and more importantly below the gum line. This tartar removal technique is similarly employed by human dentists.
- 7) **Dental Polishing and Barrier Sealant:** Polish provides a smooth tooth surface and helps delay the reattachment of plaque. Barrier sealant reduces the formation of plaque and calculus.
- 8) **Extractions (Oral Surgery):** Sometimes teeth are so diseased, they must be removed to eliminate bacterial infections. We use a state of the art high-speed, water-cooled drill (similar to human dentistry) to extract large or multi-rooted teeth. Extractions make it necessary to use antibiotics during surgery and at home.
- 9) **Pain Management:** Our philosophy is to provide each patient with multi-modal pain relief. As needed, patients may receive local anesthetic blocks, injectable pain medications and oral medications to go home for pain control.

Studies have revealed an obvious correlation between the health of pets and oral disease. Animals with clean teeth live longer lives. Schedule your pet's comprehensive oral health assessment and dental cleaning today!

Comprehensive Oral Health Assessment and Dental Cleaning:

BEFORE



AFTER





PetDesk is Here!

We have a new interactive communication tool for your pet's health called PetDesk. It is a mobile app where you will receive reminders for your pet's health care, access your pet's vaccine information and appointment history, access to refill history and has informative pet related articles. You can utilize the app for 24/7 online booking, request prescription refills, receive lab work results and you can receive text updates from our hospital staff.

Download the app now!



Dogs Corner



Dog Fact: The Saint Bernard is a dog that prefers cooler climates as it does not do well in warmer weather. They were originally bred for the freezing climate of the Alps and will be happier where they can better use their thick coats.

Saint Bernards are great for the family as they are patient and love their humans. They are nurturing dogs and get along well with children. While they may have a stubborn side, they respond very well to positive reinforcement.

Cats Corner



Cat Fact: The Cymric cat breed, also known as the Long Hair Manx, has a thick double layer coat that is well suited for cold weather. The inner layer coat helps to insulate while the thicker outer coat keeps moisture away from their bodies.

Cymrics do well with families and multi-pet households as they are very interactive. They have high energy, are trainable, affectionate and loyal.

Pet of the Month – Angie

Written by the Pet Parents and Camila Herrera

In December 2011 my wife and I were looking to adopt a new dog. We discovered the Homeless Animal Rescue Team (HART) and visited one of their adoption events after looking at the online photos and information of rescued dogs. At that event, Angie found us.

Angie came home with us a few days later. She was about two years old. For fun and curiosity, we tested her DNA and confirmed she was a Lab, but it also showed she was part Husky.

We decided that she needed to train in basic behavior, so we enrolled in a six-week training program with her for an hour once a week. The instructor, in addition to being a trainer for behavior, also worked as a Therapy Dog trainer, handler, coordinator, and examiner. She asked us if we wanted to use Angie as a therapy dog. We looked at the requirements and Angie was selected and certified after being tested.

Because we did not know what her therapy specialty would be, we first worked with a juvenile Autism event that provides a safe place for the kids while their parents could have a night off. She immediately engaged with the kids, and they lined up to talk to her and pet her.

She then went to NOVA to be with the students during final exams. Again, she immediately bonded with the students who took her to a quiet part of the room where she again performed her magic. After that she became a regular at a retirement community in Loudoun County. She visited weekly with

residents of the assisted living and skilled nursing facilities who would motion for her to come to them. She also was greeted each week by the staff.

For several years she was selected by Childrens Hospice International to greet children at Dulles Airport who “flew” there on the Fantasy Flight to the North Pole. During her visits she got to go out on the taxiway to greet airliners.

These are just a very few of the “jobs” Angie has had. We wish we had a count on the number of people that she may have helped make a difference in their lives. It was amazing the different types of people who can benefit by a visit from therapy dogs.

At 14 plus years old, as with people, Angie is now ready for retirement. She has arthritis and is having difficulty moving as fast as she once did, however she had a wonderful working life especially with the help of the staff at Franklin Farms Veterinary Clinic.



PET DENTAL AWARENESS:

In observation of National Pet Dental Health Awareness, book your pet’s dental cleaning and oral health exam during January and February and receive \$100.00 off the cost of the dental cleaning and comprehensive oral exam.

RUFFerral Program:

At Franklin Farm we believe "RUFFerrals" are the greatest form of flattery. Refer a friend and your pet will receive a \$25.00 credit at your next appointment. Your referral's pet will receive a FREE bag of treats at their first appointment.



Celebrations in January:

National Change a Pet’s Life Day:

Wednesday, January 24th celebrates the many ways you can change a pet’s life. Some of those include adopting a pet(s), fostering a pet(s), or even sponsoring a pet(s) at a local shelter. This can help the numerous pet’s that have been returned to the shelter post COVID. Call the shelters now to see how you can help these furry friends.

Cancellation Policy:

Hello Everyone:

We need your help! If you are unable to keep your appointment for any reason, please call to reschedule or cancel the appointment more than 24 hours in advance of your scheduled appointment time.

This allows ample time for other clients to call and get their fur babies seen.

We understand that you all have a lot going on in your lives and unexpected things pop up, so please remember to contact us **more than 24 hours** in advance of your scheduled appointment time.

We have implemented a Cancellation Policy, as follows:

If you need to reschedule or cancel your appointment, please do so **more than 24 hours** in advance of your appointment time. If you reschedule/cancel less than 24 hours leading up to your appointment, or no show, you will be charged for the office visit fee correlating to your appointment.

When you reschedule or cancel **more than 24 hours** in advance, it allows other patients to be seen in your rescheduled/canceled spot. This ensures the best opportunity for care for all of our patients.

Thank you for your anticipated assistance!



