

A-1 Animal Care Veterinary Services

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We mentioned your pet's dental problem at the comprehensive examination. As you know the ultrasonic scaling and polishing of the teeth requires general anesthesia of the pet. This is the point where many owners become very apprehensive and anxious about the procedure. We hope the procedures described below will relieve any of your fears or anxiety.

Monitoring of all dental patients starts at induction of anesthesia and lasts until they are conscious again. We use the safest gas anesthesia available called Isoflurane. Our senior and geriatric patients are given a mild tranquilizer about an hour before the dental procedure. They are then placed in a chamber in which the gas anesthetic is flowing. When they reach the level of deep sedation, they are removed from the chamber and the anesthetic is then administered using a facemask until the patient is unconscious. An endotracheal tube is then placed in the patient's trachea (windpipe) to prevent any fluid from flowing into the lungs. A respiratory monitor is placed on the end of the endotracheal tube to monitor the number of respirations per minute. If needed, electrodes are placed to monitor the electrical activity of the heart (ECG) during the procedure.

During the dental prophylaxis, respiration and heart rate are constantly monitored and the amount of anesthetic is adjusted as needed. When the dental procedure nears completion, reduction of the anesthetic gas flow rate brings the patient to a higher level of consciousness. As the swallowing reflex returns the endotracheal tube is removed. This is about five minutes after the procedure is finished. After another five minutes the patient is able to sit up. Within 45-60 minutes after the procedure, the cats are meowing and the dogs are wagging their tails.

For our high-risk patients we offer pre-anesthetic evaluation of the kidneys, liver, pancreas and electrolyte balance along with a complete red and white blood count. Blood samples can be drawn a day or two before the dental prophylaxis. The results are then available prior to the procedure.

The dental prophylaxis is a very important part in maintaining the wellness of your pet. The tartar that builds on your pets' teeth causes infection of the gums and accumulation of pus that leads to the horrible, bad breath characteristic of dental problems. Bacteria that are producing the pus are absorbed into the blood stream and can locate in the heart, kidneys, and liver causing localized infection and valvular problems in the heart. The most important psychological problem is the alienation of the pet from the family due to the bad breath. You no longer have a cuddly, lovable, snuggable friend but one that is only petted briefly at arm length. It is hard for your faithful friend to understand the rejection it experiences.

