



Thank you for trusting Ruxton Animal Hospital with your companion's care! After a thorough examination, the doctor has determined that your pet is in need of a dental cleaning. Good oral hygiene is a very important part of your pet's well-being, as it can help prevent a wide variety of health issues such as inappetence, chronic pain and increased risk of organ damage.

The most common but often preventable infection found in the mouth is Periodontal Disease which is caused by the build up of bacteria in the mouth.

This bacterium forms a film over your pet's teeth called "plaque" and as the bacteria die, the plaque hardens or becomes "calcified". This calcified plaque is also known as tartar. The accumulation of tartar in your pet's mouth will eventually lead to gingivitis which is an inflammation of the gums causing redness, swelling and irritation around the base of your pet's teeth and if left unattended, this inflammation can lead to infections of the teeth and their roots. In later, more severe stages of Periodontal Disease, the tissue around the teeth is destroyed and the sockets holding your pet's teeth in place erode causing them to become loose.

Cracked and/or broken teeth is another common dental concern which often occurs when your pet chews on hard treats or toys such as deer antlers, raw hides, bones, etc; A broken tooth can expose a nerve, which is very painful. Exposed nerves are also more susceptible to infection in which case, the only way to provide your pet relief is to have the broken tooth removed.

Dental cleanings or "Dental Prophylaxis" is the scaling and polishing of your pet's teeth. This process involves the removal of calcified plaque and irrigation of the gums with a medical grade ultrasonic scaler. Once the tartar is removed, your medical team will be able to examine your pet's teeth more effectively. Digital radiographic images of their mouth will also be taken, allowing the doctor to analyze the structure below the gumline, checking for broken teeth, assessing the integrity of their roots, and determining if any extractions are needed.

Since your pet cannot be expected to remain still with their mouth open wide for an extended period, general anesthesia will be required. As with any anesthetic procedure, a blood pre-screening is necessary as it allows us to check for conditions that may affect your pet's procedure. Some of these conditions may include but are not limited to anemia, diabetes, and liver or kidney disease. While any anesthetic event entails some risk, pre-screening measures help minimize them. This screening can be done the day of your pet's dental procedure or before, as long as it is completed within the appropriate window prior to their appointment date.

To help avoid complications, your pet should be fasted for 6-8 hours prior to their dental cleaning. We advise withholding food and snacks after midnight on the eve of the procedure, but free access to water is allowed. On the day of their cleaning, you should arrive at your scheduled drop off time, which is typically between 8:00a – 9:00a; here you'll be met by your admitting technician who will review key information regarding your pet's care.

In most cases, the dental prophylaxis procedure takes approximately 30-45 minutes, although this can take longer should your pet require more extensive work. For your pet's safety, this process is performed with essential medical equipment used to closely monitor blood pressure, oxygen levels, heart activity and body temperature. You can also expect a small area of their leg to be shaved, as a catheter will be placed intravenously. It is imperative that all anesthetized patients have an IV catheter as it allows us to effectively administer medications and provide fluids during and after the procedure.

Most patients will be able to return home the same day as their procedure. While your pet is in recovery, you will receive a medical update and a scheduled pickup time. You can expect some initial grogginess and oral sensitivity within the first 24-48 hours; however, every patient is unique and responses after anesthesia can vary. Upon pickup, a medical team member will provide you with detailed aftercare instructions that will be critical in promoting optimal at-home dental hygiene.

If you would like further information or if you have any additional questions about your pet's dental care and/or cleaning, do not hesitate to reach out as our team would be happy to assist you!