

Dental Disease in Cats What is it?

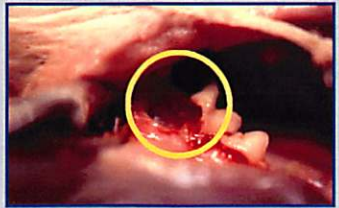
Dental disease is different in cats than in dogs. The primary form is gingivitis (inflammation of the gums) and FORLs (Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions). Regular dental cleaning (i.e. deep cleaning under anesthesia) allows early treatment and prevents more serious disease from developing.



Gingivitis

Gingivitis, if treated early, can be controlled with regular dental cleaning. If left untreated, periodontal disease often progresses to more severe disease, including FORLs and stomatitis. A

special form of gingivitis seen in certain purebred cats. The only effective treatment is tooth extraction.



FORLs

(Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions)

FORLs are very common in cats and are frequently referred to as cavities, neck lesions, root resorptions, and cervical line erosions.

FORLs ARE PAINFUL! Their cause is unknown, although those cats with gingivitis and tartar tend to be predisposed. In a recent study, 72% of cats five years and older had at least one painful FORL. The only effective treatment is extraction.



Stomatitis

Stomatitis is a severe oral disease affecting cats who develop allergy to plaque on the teeth. The allergic response begins as inflammation of the area where the tooth meets the gum line,

then progresses to severe disease involving the palate and tonsillar regions. The first line of therapy involves deep cleaning of the teeth and, if possible, strict home care. With more severe disease, extraction of affected teeth is necessary.

Why are Dental X-rays Important for Cats?



The tooth on the left looks normal, doesn't it? But dental x-ray reveals the painful **FORL** (Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesion) lurking below the gum line.

A Retained Root

often causes chronic infection and, in most cases, should be extracted.



The American College of Veterinary

Dentistry recommends whole mouth x-rays during every dental cleaning. Since most dental pathology in cats involves the roots, x-rays are often the only way to visualize disease. We use the Schick® Digital X-ray system which provides excellent quality images and allows you to view them after the procedure to better understand our treatment.



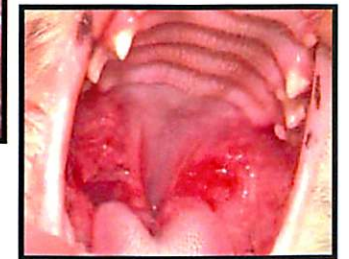
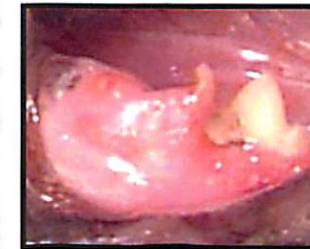
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Recognize any of these mouths?



If so, your cat may need dental work.

Why is dental care important?

Dental disease doesn't just cause bad breath, it affects the general health of cats, **causing pain and disease affecting other organs**. Dental disease is perhaps the most overlooked and under-treated areas in small animal medicine. Most feline patients over five years old will have oral lesions that require immediate care to relieve pain.

Is dental disease painful?

YES! The pain associated with a bad tooth is excruciating. Cavities in cats cause so much pain that, even while under anesthesia, cats will quiver their jaws when probed. Owners frequently notice a personality change after their cats have been treated.



Remember: your cat has no way of telling you that it hurts!

How are teeth cleaned in cats?

The same as in people! An ultrasonic dental scaler and hand instruments remove tartar from the enamel surface. A hand scaler is then used to remove tartar below the gum line. The teeth are polished and the mouth examined. X-rays are taken and further treatment may be performed, if necessary. The difference between teeth cleaning in cats and people: **Dental cleaning in cats requires general anesthesia.**

What kind of anesthesia is used?

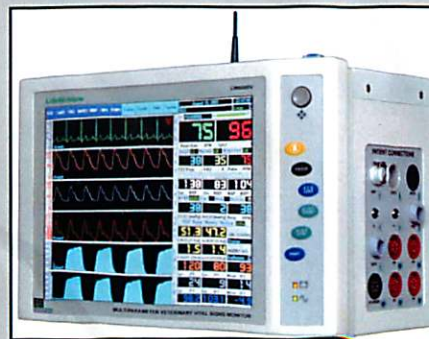
We use Isoflurane, a common inhalant anesthetic agent in human and veterinary medicine. It allows rapid recovery and has a wide margin of safety. Since many of the cats on which we perform dentistry are older, and since dental cleaning should occur several times during your cat's lifetime, we minimize risk and provide the smoothest anesthetic recovery by using Isoflurane.

What precautions are taken?

We recommend pre-anesthesia lab work and electrocardiography to help us determine the presence of underlying disease. By performing these tests, we can decrease the risk of anesthesia.

Our patients are:

- ◆ Placed on a heated water blanket to maintain body temperature, and wake up in a heated recovery cage
- ◆ Monitored with a Digicare® Life Monitor during anesthesia for oxygen saturation, respiration, heart rate, body temperature, end-tidal carbon dioxide, and blood pressure.
- ◆ Given intravenous fluids to maintain blood pressure, electrolyte balance and hydration during anesthesia, providing faster and smoother recovery.



Digicare® Life Monitor

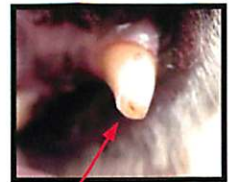
How often does my cat need to have its teeth cleaned?

You should have your cat's teeth examined on a yearly basis, and, in general, we recommend dental cleaning **every 12 to 24 months**.

Do I need to treat a fractured tooth?

Absolutely!

A fractured tooth, with an exposed pulp cavity, is **painful**, allows bacteria to enter the bloodstream infecting other parts of the body, and leads to a dental abscess. Either a root-canal should be performed, which preserves the tooth, or the tooth should be extracted.



Tooth Fracture



Dental Abscess

Do cats get cavities?

Yes! They're not exactly like cavities in humans, they're worse! Cat cavities, or feline odontoclastic resorptive lesions (**FORLs**), can occur in any tooth, although they most commonly affect the lower premolars. Over 70% of cats five years of age and older have **painful** cavities, and although the cause is unknown, dental tartar is a major risk factor. Cats with cavities may bleed from the mouth or have difficulty chewing. **Most cats do not show obvious signs, but are in pain** and should be treated.