

UNDERSTANDING DENTAL CARE FOR DOGS AND CATS



Riverbend Animal Hospital

***“What’s the big deal about
cleaning and evaluating my pet’s teeth?”***

“Why is anesthesia needed?”

“Why are radiographs (x-rays) used?”

***“Why is the estimate for dental cleaning,
evaluation, and treatment so broad?”***

We hear those questions all the time, and we understand the confusion. So we’ve prepared this booklet to answer some of those questions and to help you understand why pet dental health is important.



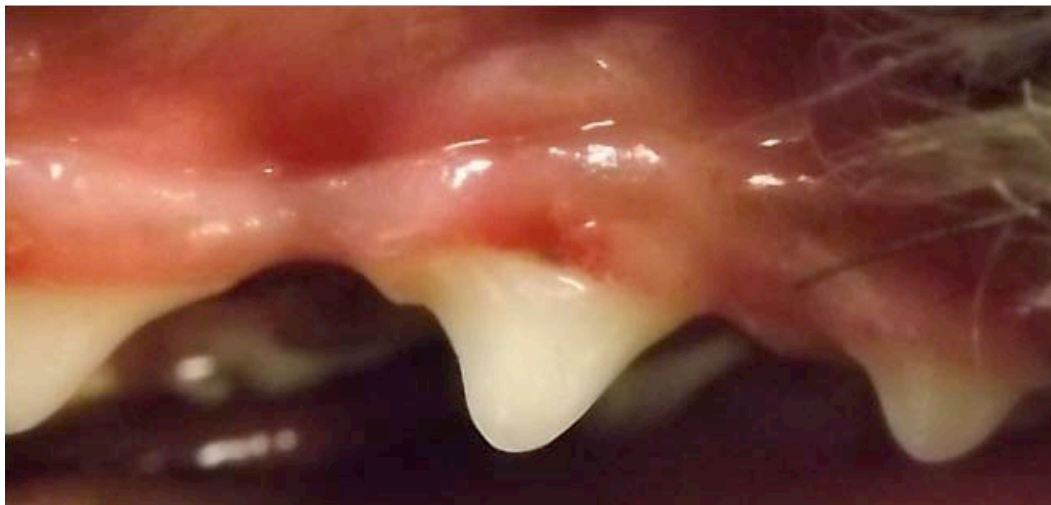
During an outpatient appointment, we check your pet's mouth.

This preliminary evaluation allows us to get a general idea of your pet's oral health. But how much can we tell? What do you think? Are these teeth healthy, or does this dog have a problem? And if there is a problem, will teeth need to be extracted? Just how bad are these teeth? It is hard to tell, and that's why it is hard to predict exactly how much a procedure will cost.



There may be a problem here.

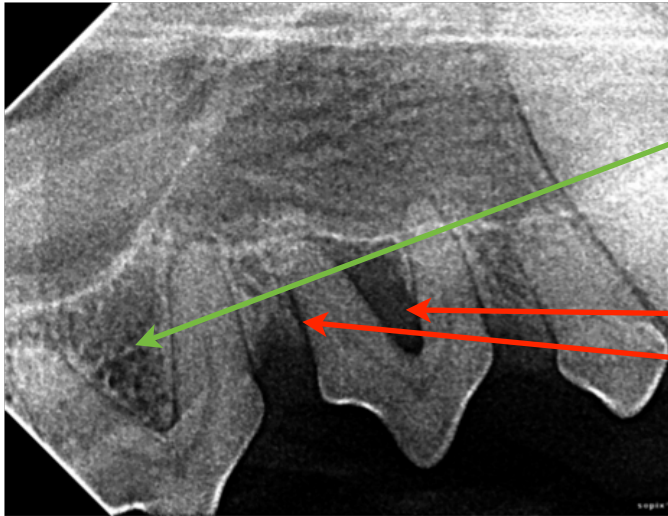
To the naked eye this tooth doesn't look terrible, but it doesn't look quite right. We need more information. For a full evaluation, the dog must be anesthetized, the teeth thoroughly cleaned, and radiographs taken of every tooth.



We've anesthetized the dog and cleaned his teeth.

This tooth looks better. We can now evaluate the tooth fully.

This involves probing around the tooth looking for pockets or other disease and taking dental radiographs.



This is what healthy bone looks like.

These dark areas show bone loss.

Here's what we found with the dental radiographs.

There is greater than 50% bone loss around the tooth roots of this pre-molar. This indicates infection. Infection causes pain and could potentially lead to the spread of infection to the jaw and to other teeth.



Here's what we did.

With the dog still under anesthesia, we created a tissue flap, removed the infected root and tooth, then sutured the gum closed. This procedure will also stop the infection from spreading.



Without examination under anesthesia and the dental radiographs, we would not have been able to detect this problem and resolve it.

Be sure to discuss your pet's dental health with Riverbend's veterinarians at your next visit.

Dental photos courtesy of Pet Ed Veterinary Education and Training Resources
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