

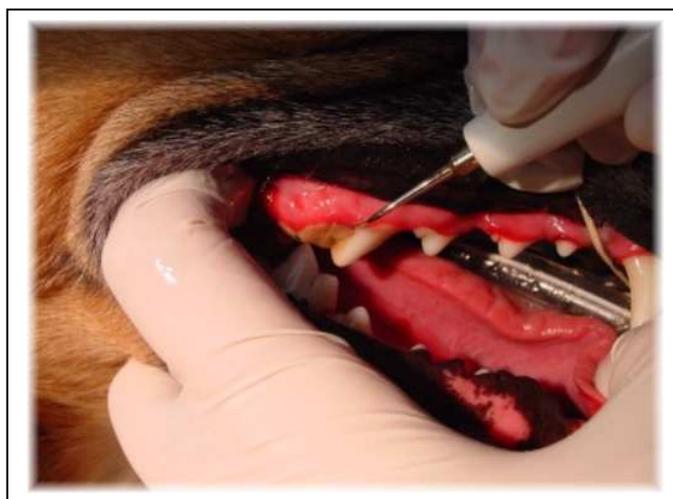
## DENTAL HEALTH CARE

Proper dental hygiene is a very important part of the overall health care for your pet. Tartar and calculus build-up on the teeth is a very common cause of bad breath, as well as other more serious health problems. The bacteria that originate in the mouth can cause tooth root infections and abscesses if they invade local tissues, and can be a cause of damage to other vital organs if they enter the blood stream. Proper dental care at home combined with dental hygiene and cleaning procedures done in our office can extend the length and quality of your pet's life.



During a routine physical examination, our veterinarians will evaluate your pet's mouth and make recommendations about any issues that will need attention. This may be a routine prophylaxis, which involves scaling and polishing the teeth, fluoride treatment, and measurement of the gums to watch for future problem areas. Or, if more serious problems are identified, it may involve dental x-rays, tooth extractions, gum biopsy, or gum-flaps to cover over extraction sites. These procedures are all performed in an area of our clinic specifically designed and outfitted for dentistry.

General anesthesia is required for all dental procedures. Unfortunately, our patients will not lie still in a dental chair! Teeth cleaning is performed by a combination of hand-scaling and scaling using an ultrasonic scaling device. Polishing the teeth after scaling is very important to remove small defects in the tooth enamel caused by the calculus and tartar. This is done with a rotating cup and pumice paste, similar to what is used in human dentistry. The discomfort for your pet following routine cleaning and polishing is no different than you would feel after a routine dental appointment.



When extractions or oral surgery are needed, our veterinarians have top of the line equipment at their disposal, including high and low speed air drills, laser surgery, and a full line of dental surgical instruments. This, and the high level of experience and training of our dental team allows for the procedures to be performed as efficiently and non-traumatically as possible, thereby decreasing the recovery time and discomfort for your pet.

