



## The Dental Cleaning

- 1. Pre-anesthetic bloodwork** (optional) is always recommended when undergoing general anesthesia. It is important to understand that not all pets will appear sick with some of the early disease processes that can be detected with these tests. Two blood tests are available:
  - The chemistry panel checks your pets' blood glucose, kidney and liver values, electrolytes, and hydration, among other things. This test is helpful in detecting early kidney and liver problems, congenital defects, diabetes, and other things that may increase the risks associated with general anesthesia.
  - The complete blood count (CBC) is a test that counts all of your pet's blood cells, making sure they are balanced as they should be. A few potential health problems that can be detected by performing a CBC included anemia, infection, parasites, and dehydration. The CBC also counts the platelets in the bloodstream. Platelets are highly involved in clotting the blood – it is not uncommon for there to be some bleeding from the gums during a dental cleaning. It's especially important to know that he or she has adequate platelets if tooth extractions are necessary (see below).
- 2. Dental Prophylaxis** (the actual dental cleaning) is performed under general anesthesia and consists of two different steps:
  - Scaling is the process of removing the plaque, tartar, and dental calculus deposits from all surfaces of every tooth. Special instruments are able to go beneath the gumline and clean portions of the tooth's root as well.
  - Polishing uses a special polishing paste to smooth the tooth surface. This prevents bacteria from collecting in the microscopic scratches of the tooth surface.
- 3. Dental radiographs** (optional) are an important diagnostic tool when determining oral health. When a tooth is broken, discolored, or abnormal in any way, it is often helpful to view an X-ray of that tooth. X-rays give us a look at the health inside the tooth and below the gumline; they are also an indication of the health of the bone surrounding the tooth. Things like tumors and abscesses can be detected by dental radiographs, as well.
- 4. Tooth extractions** are often necessary in order to return a dog or cat's mouth to a healthy state. Loose teeth can be caused by severe disease and the partial or sometimes complete disintegration of the normal bone and connective tissue surrounding a tooth. These teeth can be very painful to pets. Teeth that are badly chipped or broken sometimes leave the tooth's blood supply and nerves exposed, leaving the tooth very painful and at risk for infection and/or abscess. Loose or broken teeth either need to be extracted or the pet needs to be referred to a veterinary dental specialist to discuss further procedures to save the tooth/teeth.
- 5. Clindoral** (optional) is an antibiotic-releasing gel that can be applied to a pet's gingival pockets. It acts as a temporary protective barrier that prevents food and micro-organisms from collecting in and around the pockets during the period following the dental cleaning. This product has shown the ability to help reverse early to moderate dental disease and save teeth that would otherwise need to be extracted. Clindoral is applied while the pet is still sleeping and slowly breaks down over 7 to 10 days.

