

MINTLAW VET SURGERY



Dunshillock Mintlaw AB42 4JN



WHAT HAPPENS IN A DENTAL?

Dental disease is the most common illness suffered by our pets. The effects are not just seen in the mouth, they affect the whole body. Infection from the mouth may be carried via the blood stream, and can lodge on the heart valves, in the kidneys, or elsewhere.

This is why a dental has been recommended for your pet.

Once admitted, your pet will be anaesthetised – as pets don't realise that they need to stay still, with their mouth open, general anaesthesia **must** be used – this allows us to treat the mouth with no risk of stress or injury to them. The details of anaesthesia are explained in the anaesthetic information pack.

Next, the teeth are assessed – this will involve the removal of gross calculus ('tartar') first, using forceps to gently chip it off without damaging the gum. Once this is done, the surface of the teeth can be examined for cracks, holes (neck-lesions in cats), and caries. Some cases require x-rays to be taken to allow assessment of the roots under the gum, as these cannot be examined from the mouth.

The teeth will then be cleaned more thoroughly, starting in the pocket of gum around each tooth, called the gingival sulcus, as plaque and calculus are often present here. This is done by hand. The main parts of the tooth are then cleaned using an ultrasonic scaler – this is an instrument with a vibrating tip, which dislodges the calculus, using water to assist with this, and to prevent heat damage to the teeth.

At this point, any necessary extractions will be carried out. Teeth must be removed if they are loose, cracked, affected by caries, infected, or, in cats, if they have neck lesions (holes through the enamel which expose the nerve). In the case of larger teeth, it may be recommended to pack the socket with material to encourage bone growth to fill the socket, preventing weakening of the jaw. In some cases, the gums are stitched over the remaining hole, preventing food becoming stuck, and improving comfort for your pet.

The scaling procedure leaves small scratches on the surface of the tooth – these are great for allowing plaque to reattach. Therefore, polishing is carried out to smooth the surface of the now clean tooth.

Depending on what work has been necessary, your pet may be discharged with antibiotics, and/or painkillers.

Dental clinics are provided, to ensure the mouth has healed well, and, later, to advise on dental preventive care, to try and avoid the need for further work under anaesthetic.

Your pet will usually be admitted in the morning, and discharged in the afternoon of the same day. We recommend soft food for 2 weeks following extractions to allow the gum to heal. During this time, it is important to avoid hard chews and toys!



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