



## **Dental Prophylaxis and Treatment at Riverside Animal Hospital**

Treatment plans for comprehensive dental prophylaxis procedures are made with every effort to be accurate, reasonable, and individualized. However, it is not possible to completely evaluate an awake pet's mouth. Frequently, dental issues are not identified until the pet is under general anesthesia. These can include broken teeth, loose teeth, periodontal disease, and oral growths- just to name a few.

Dental radiographs are an important part of evaluating your pet's oral health. Without them, we cannot see below the gum line, which is where 60-70% of the tooth resides and many painful problems can hide. Radiographs also show whether there is bone loss or anatomic concerns that make an indicated procedure (such as a tooth extraction) at higher risk for complications. Dental radiographs are considered standard of care in pets- just as they are for humans, and are highly recommended.

If a tooth is causing pain or has substantial infection, extraction is the most readily available cure. We do not extract teeth unless medically necessary, and do so with the singular goal of improving your pet's health and preventing future problems (when able). The risks from dental extractions include fistulas, swelling, bleeding, sepsis, pain, broken roots tips, and in very rare cases- jaw fractures. The risk of these complications occurring is higher in patients with severe dental disease, and in certain breeds. Your pet's comfort and safety is our greatest concern, so in some situations we may not be able to complete all the work that needs to be done at one visit, or we may decide the risk of complications outweighs the benefit for your pet.

There are veterinarians who are board-certified specialists in dental care and procedures- we are general practitioners experienced in dentistry, but we are not dental specialists.

Referral to a dental specialist is an option for all of our patients, so please inquire if you are interested. Referral to a dental specialist is strongly recommended for complicated or high-risk cases, or advanced dental procedures. There are several excellent dental specialists located in the Albany/Corvallis and Portland areas, and periodically there is a local option of a travelling pet dentist at Bend Equine. We are happy to facilitate a referral for your pet- just ask!

Please carefully review your pet's treatment plan and ask questions! We are committed to helping you make informed decisions, and doing all we can to achieve the best outcome for your pet.