

IF YOUR CAT IS TO HAVE A DENTAL PERFORMED, THEN PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE THE DATE OF THE DENTAL IS SCHEDULED AND SIGN WHERE INDICATED.

Most cats have some form of dental disease at some point during their lives. The kind of dental disease depends on several factors, including genetics and individual tendencies toward having bad teeth. Some cats will have severe, painful gingivitis with little being wrong with the teeth themselves. Others may have huge amounts of tartar built up over their teeth, such that the actual teeth are barely visible. This tartar is a constant source of infection and will cause oral ulcerations simply by rubbing against the gums and oral mucus membrane. In most cases, a cat will have at least one or two cavities. The kinds of cavities that cats get are different from those caused by bacterial decay seen in people and dogs. They get what is known as cervical line lesions caused by cells called osteoclasts which dissolve the substance of the tooth. The reason for this is not known, but clearly if the teeth are kept clean, the formation of these cavities is at least delayed.

It is important to realize that these dental cavities, like any other, can cause extreme pain and discomfort in your cat. Some cats will eat less than they might otherwise do. Others will vomit after eating because of the pain caused by chewing. But in most cases, you will not see any obvious evidence of just how painful these cavities are. Cats are very good at hiding the fact they don't feel well, even when they may be seriously ill. Most owners report that after their cats have their dentals, it is then that they see the difference. What was thought to be a kind of quiet cat, now becomes more outgoing and friendly. The crabby cat now becomes better tempered and the cat who hated to have its head touched now adores being petted behind the ears.

There are only three things we can do with the teeth that have cavities. We can send you to a veterinary dentist who has undergone special training and is best qualified to repair them. Most are not reparable, since only the most superficial very early lesions are worth filling. Even then, these fillings may not last much beyond a few months. In all cases, x-rays of the roots must be taken first to make sure the tooth is still viable. The other option is to extract the tooth. This is not a big deal if only one or two teeth are involved. But in a great number of cases, as many as eleven or more teeth require extraction. Some cats have such bad teeth that it is not worth leaving any teeth in at all. The thought of their cat having no teeth is very difficult for a lot of concerned owners. Living in a country which stresses dental care, we tend to project the idea of having beautiful teeth, any teeth at all, onto our pets. But the bottom line is that teeth with painful cavities are beyond useless. They cause an animal's life to be one of constant pain; and so the third option, to leave these teeth in, is, to put it bluntly inhumane. People will ask about the pain associated with having many teeth extracted at once. It is a minor discomfort compared to having them remain, and it is short-lived discomfort. Most cats go home and eat right away! The next question in, "How will my cat eat if it has few or no teeth?" Well, they do just fine. That may be hard to believe, but they do. Most continue to eat dry food as well! This veterinarian owns a cat without a tooth in his mouth; he is very happy and eats all the foods he did before, including his dry food. (By the way, I am also the person who extracted all those teeth, so I can say to you that I do not do things to other cats that I would not do to my own.)

Please be assured that I do not extract teeth because I enjoy it. It is not particularly a fun thing to do. I do it because I know that it is the right thing to do for the well-being of the animal. I would never do something so drastic if it would harm an animal. We do not harm cats at The Cat Practice. We endeavor to help them through easing pain and suffering, and bad teeth are one of the more common causes of pain and suffering in the domestic cat population.

Lastly, we cannot tell how many teeth have cavities until they have been cleaned, but since the cat will be under anesthesia and time is of the essence, there is no opportunity to consult with the owner before tooth extraction. Please be assured I will not remove any teeth unless absolutely necessary. If you would like to be referred to a veterinary dentist, then just call and we will be happy to do so.

I understand that dental work is routinely performed as part of a comprehensive health plan, but is not without some risks. I realize my cat will receive general anesthesia and will have dental procedures performed at the doctor's discretion as described above. Extractions or oral surgery may be performed as deemed beneficial to my cat's health.

Cat's name: _____

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, UNDERSTAND IT AND HEREBY SIGN THIS RELEASE AND AUTHORIZATION.

PROCEED WITH MY CAT'S DENTAL AND EXTRACT THOSE TEETH YOU FIND TO HAVE CAVITIES.

CLEAN, POLISH, AND FLUORIDE MY CAT'S TEETH; BUT DO NOT EXTRACT ANY BAD TEETH SINCE I WOULD LIKE TO CONSULT A VETERINARY DENTIST.

Signature: _____

Phone number where owner can be reached: _____

- FVRCP Vaccination
- Rabies Vaccination
- Leukemia Vaccination

- Trim Nails (No charge)
- Pre-anesthetic Blood work
- Other: _____

Date: _____

We strongly encourage you to clean your cat's teeth at home. It has been shown that daily cleaning is the best means of prevention of dental disease.