



AAHA Dental Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats

Veterinary dental care is a vital and necessary for good health and quality of life for companion animals. Diseases of the oral cavity, when left untreated, are painful and can often contribute to other diseases. The AAHA's (American Animal Hospital Association) Dental Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats offers guidelines for materials and equipment, dental cleaning and evaluation, client communication, and pet home care.

As highlighted in the report, dental procedures cause aerosolization on bacteria and particulate matter. Use of a dedicated space, separate from them sterile surgical suite and preferably in a low-traffic area, is recommended for nonsterile dental procedures. Appropriate ventilation and anesthetic scavenging systems must also be utilized. Low-heat, high-intensity lighting and magnification are required to adequately and safely visualize the oral cavity and its structures. The operating table must allow for drainage and be constructed of impervious, cleanable material. Aspiration of water and debris by the patient must be prevented through endotracheal intubation, suction, and packing the posterior oral cavity with gauze. Proper positioning of the patient and/or use of an inclined table can also help prevent aspiration.

Materials Needed:

- Antiseptic rinse
- Prophy paste/pumice
- Prophy angle and cups
- Fluoride
- Sealant
- Needles and syringes
- Intraoral radiographic or digital film in multiple sizes
- Measures to prevent hypothermia (e.g. towels, blankets, circulating water blankets, hot air blanket, ect.)
- Gauze and sponges
- Locally applied antimicrobial agent
- Suture material (4-0 and smaller)
- Bone augmentation material
- Hemostatic agents (if desired)
- Local anesthetic drugs

Equipment for performing dental procedures:

- Equipment to expose and process intraoral dental films
- A high- and low-speed delivery system for air and water
- Equipment for sterilization instruments
- Low- and high-speed hand pieces (minimum two of each)
- Burs
- Powered scaler (ultrasonic, subsonic or piezoelectric)
- Suction (optional)
- Fiberoptic light source (optional)

Instruments to include in the dental surgical pack:

- Scalers
- Curettes
- Probes/explorer
- Sharpening materials
- Scalpel
- Extraction equipment (e.g. periosteal elevators, luxators, periodontal elevators, extraction forceps, root tip picks, root tip forceps)
- Thumb forceps
- Hemostats
- Mayo and Metzenbaum scissors
- Needle holders
- Mouth mirror
- Head/eye loupes or other methods of magnification

Minimum protective devices to be used during dental procedures:

- Cap
- Hair bonnet
- Mask
- Goggles, surgical spectacles or face shield
- Smock
- Surgical gloves
- Earplugs
- Dosimeter
- Protection from radiation (e.g., lead shield)

For more information or to read the entire report, visit www.aahanet.org/library/dentalcare.aspx