

Cat Dental Cleaning: What To Expect And How To Prepare

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You schedule your vet appointment yearly, but are you keeping up with your cat’s dental health? Just like humans, your feline friend should also be getting a check-up on their choppers. A cat dental cleaning will help ensure that your pet’s oral health is A-OK.

In this article, we’ll let you know what to expect during your cat’s dental cleaning and how to best prepare for it. We’ll also give you some tips for in-between visits to keep your feline’s teeth clean and healthy.



The Importance Of Cleaning Your Cat’s Teeth

Get out that toothbrush! Your cat’s dental health has a big impact on their overall health, and it’s up to you as their pet parent to make sure their teeth are in tip-top shape. Without proper oral care, they may end up with gum disease, tooth decay, infections, and even bad breath.

In addition to helping prevent dental disease(open in new tab), cat dental cleanings also cut down on your cat’s risk of heart and kidney disease. That’s because plaque buildup on the teeth can capture bacteria that spreads to the bloodstream, and then to the heart and other vital organs.

Cleanings can lessen plaque buildup and, as a result, the risk.

Many people think because their cat doesn’t show signs of distress, their teeth are doing just fine. However, cats are notoriously tight-lipped about aches and pains, so they might be suffering a tooth condition right under your nose.

Besides that, much of the tartar can build up under your furry friend’s gumline, so you won’t necessarily see it.

The best thing you can do is make an appointment with your vet to take a look at your cat’s pearly whites.

Cat Dental Cleaning: What To Expect

If your cat hasn’t had their teeth cleaned before, it’s good to know what to expect so you can best prepare for their trip to the “dentist.”



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Physical Exam

Before beginning the cleaning, the vet will perform a physical exam to confirm that your kitty needs it. They’ll also take note of potential dental issues.

After that, your vet will likely take some of kitty’s blood for a pre-anesthetic blood test to ensure your cat’s liver and kidney functions are strong enough for anesthesia. Your vet also may take a look at your cat’s heart and abdomen.

If they notice signs of severe infection during the exam, they may prescribe an antibiotic prior to the cleaning. Once your kitty gets the go-ahead from the vet, it’s time to schedule your cat's dental cleaning.

Anesthesia

A cat dental cleaning is a little more involved than your own trip to the dentist, as your cat’s sharp teeth and claws make it impractical to do while they’re awake.

The cleaning will require general anesthesia(open in new tab), which makes all parties more comfortable — cat and vet alike. This will allow the vet to carefully and thoroughly look in their mouth without stressing the cat.

IV Fluids And Antibiotics

Your little kitty will be fitted with an IV catheter when under anesthesia in order to deliver fluids and possibly antibiotics during the procedure. The vet will monitor their vitals while they clean their teeth to ensure that your cat's heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure are stable.

X-Rays

It's common for cats whose teeth look outwardly normal to have hidden issues below the gumline. Your vet will have to take x-rays in order to see if there are lesions, decay, bone loss, cysts, or retained baby teeth below the gumline.



Scaling And Polishing

Your vet will remove tartar by scaling your kitty's teeth first, using hand and ultrasonic scalers. As any tartar below the gumline is the biggest culprit in dental disease, they will address this area thoroughly.

In addition, the vet may use a dental probe to look at gum bleeding and pockets that are ripe for decay. After scaling, they'll polish your cat's teeth and apply a protective sealant.

Extractions And More X-Rays

As it’s hard to predict what your cat will need before the cleaning, you’ll want to stay reachable so the doctor can contact you with any questions during the procedure.

If your cat is found to have more advanced dental disease, the vet may have to perform an extraction of one or more teeth. If they have to do an extraction, they’ll numb and pull the diseased tooth and then suture the hole so it can heal.

After extracting the tooth, your vet will do a second X-ray to be sure the tooth was removed entirely.

Costs

The cost for a cat dental cleaning could vary from $200 to $2000 or more depending on your location and whether your pet has any disease or requires extractions. It’s always smart to have pet insurance, which may defray the cost a bit.

Aftercare

After your kitty’s dental cleaning, let them take it easy. Once your cat is back at home and settled, give them a small amount of soft food and lots of TLC.

If your cat had an extraction, your vet may prescribe an antibiotic or pain medication.



Cat Dental Cleaning: How To Prepare

Because your cat will have general anesthesia for their dental cleaning, it's important to follow your vet's recommendations in terms of prepping them for the procedure.

Food And Water

Surgery should be done on an empty stomach, so withhold your pet's food at least eight hours before your scheduled cat dental appointment. As for water, they should be able to drink only up until the morning of the appointment.

Medication

You'll want to make sure the vet knows all of the medicines that your kitty is on so they can give you specific instructions in preparation for the cleaning.

Keeping Up Good Cat Dental Habits

As we said, oral health is key to the overall health of your kitty, so it's best to make good dental habits part of your daily routine. Here are some things you can do.

Indulge In Dental Treats And Toys

An easy way to take care of your cat's oral health is to add dental cat treats to their diet(open in new tab). GREENIES™ Feline Dental Cat Treats help clean your kitty's teeth while reducing tartar and freshening their breath.

In addition to treats, hard chew toys can help get rid of tartar and keep your cat's teeth

healthy. Treats and toys are best used in addition to a brushing routine and a healthy diet, which we'll discuss below.



Brush Your Cat's Teeth Daily

Brushing your cat's teeth daily is the best way to stave off dental disease.

The American Veterinary Medical Association suggests starting early, while your kitty is young. You can start with cat-friendly toothpaste and gauze when they're a kitten and progress to a bristled finger brush as they get older.

Stimulate Their Gums

As part of a good dental routine, you'll also want to stimulate your kitty's gums by massaging them. This can strengthen their gums and make them heal faster.



Try A Dental Diet

Consider putting your kitty on a dental diet in order to support their oral health. A dental diet generally consists of larger kibble sizes so your cat will have to chew more, and the fibrous food scrapes the tartar from the teeth.

However, before changing your cat's diet, it's best to talk to your vet so they can recommend the right diet to maintain your kitty's overall health.

Give Them Fresh Water

Fresh water helps clean your furry friend's teeth after a meal, washing out any debris left over from the food.

Visit Your Vet Regularly

Of course, you'll want to visit your vet regularly to keep up with your pet's overall health, including their teeth.

Tip: If your kitty has any medication to take, our Feline Pill Pockets can make it more palatable for them!

Look Out For Any Changes

Now that you'll be very familiar with your little kitty's mouth, you'll want to be on the

lookout for any changes.

Check their gums using the “flip lip test” — healthy gums are pink. If they are red, yellowish, or bleeding, you’ll want to make a vet appointment because those signs could indicate dental disease(open in new tab).

Also, look for changes in appetite or any hunger strikes that last more than a couple of days. These behaviors could also indicate an issue with your cat’s teeth.



Smile, Kitty!

As we said, your cat’s oral health is closely connected to their overall health. Having a cat dental cleaning can help stave off conditions like gum disease, tooth decay, bad breath, and even heart disease.

In this article, we told you what to expect at your cat’s dental appointment and how to prepare. We also walked you through several things that you can do in-between appointments.

Consider adding our GREENIES™ Cat Dental Treats in flavors like roasted chicken, savory salmon, tempting tuna, and even catnip to your daily routine to maintain your cat’s oral

health. The crunchy texture cleans teeth, reduces tartar buildup, and even freshens breath.

Include GREENIES™ in your kitty's dental health plan to keep your feline friend smiling wide!

References

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine(open in new tab)

National Library of Medicine(open in new tab)

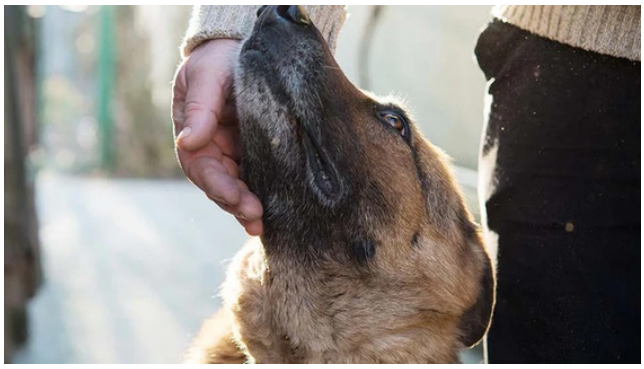
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