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## Not All Dental Procedures Are Equal

*Questions that you can ask to find out what type of procedure your pet is going to receive.*

We understand that cost is often a factor in choosing your pet's health care. We want you to understand the factors that go into determining the cost of our dental procedures. Here at **Liberty Veterinary Medical Center** we do everything we can do minimize every pet's stress and discomfort by using the **safest** procedures possible.

Surgical practices and procedures can vary widely among veterinary facilities. This list of questions is designed to help you acquire information on how the procedure that your pet needs will be performed. Once armed with the answers you'll be able to compare one veterinary hospital's standard of care and prices with another.

We invite you to compare our standards to any veterinary facility. Once you evaluate the level of care your pet will receive at **Liberty Veterinary Medical Center** we believe your decision will be clear.

**\*\*\*At Liberty Veterinary Medical Center the answer to all of the following questions is, "YES"\*\*\***

### **1.) Will the dental procedure be guided by DENTAL X-RAYS and performed with special equipment?**

Properly performed dentistry requires specialized equipment. Hand scalers, probes, dental elevators, extractors as well as an ultrasonic scaler, dental polisher, and high speed drill are all needed to perform proper examination, evaluation, and treatment of dental disease. Dental radiographs are now the standard of care for ALL dental procedures. In our clinic they are performed **on all** dentistry patients and are needed to evaluate the teeth beneath the gum line, the bone in the upper and lower jaws, and to guide any needed extraction or restoration procedures. Teeth that appear normal to the naked eye on a regular exam can have serious disease hiding beneath the gum line that can only be found with careful examination, probing and x-rays.

### **2.) Will my pet have a preoperative examination and lab work?**

Before we ever consider a procedure, a thorough physical exam is performed by your pet's veterinarian. Blood-work will be performed in advance of the surgery date in order to assess key indicators of internal health such as liver enzymes, kidney enzymes, indicators of anemia, infection and inflammation. These steps, while not able to test for every possible disease, are essential to properly assess patient health and reveal any medical conditions that might need to be addressed prior to undergoing anesthesia.

### **3.) Will my pet receive intravenous fluids while under anesthesia?**

Intravenous (IV) fluids are very important in maintaining hydration during the procedure. They help sustain a safe blood pressure while under anesthesia which protects vital organs. Kidney damage caused by episodes of low blood pressure while under anesthesia may not show up for years! The IV line also allows emergency venous access in the event an emergency situation.

### **4.) Will my pet be monitored during and after anesthesia?**

Your pet's primary care veterinarian will be assisted by a trained veterinary nurse whose task during and after the procedure is patient monitoring.



**5.) Will my pet receive pain medication?**

We know that our pets' teeth are innervated much like our own. Our pets experience dental pain the same way we do, **but they are less likely to SHOW pain until severe problems have developed.** Just because a patient is eating and drinking doesn't mean they are not in pain. Eating and drinking are necessary for survival. They are amazing in their ability to take care of their basic needs despite considerable pain and discomfort. In any modern well-run veterinary hospital, pain medication should be the rule, not an option, for any painful situation. Those hospitals that have high standards pre-medicate their anesthetic patients with pain killers even before they are put under anesthesia. This assures that the pain medication is working by the time the surgery starts. They also continue pain medications as needed while the pet is in the hospital and, if a procedure has been performed that is painful such as a dental extraction, dispense pain medications to be used once the patient is home.

**6.) Will my pet receive a modern balanced anesthesia, be intubated, and breathe 100% oxygen while under anesthesia?**

Often a pet parent's main concern about a procedure is the anesthesia itself. Balanced anesthesia allows veterinarians to minimize patient risk and maximize patient comfort and safety. The objectives of balanced anesthesia are to calm the patient, minimize pain, and reduce the potential for adverse effects associated with analgesic and anesthetic agents. Pets who receive a sedative and a pain killer even before they are put under anesthesia have less chance of complications during surgery. Pets who feel pain need more anesthesia and higher doses of anesthesia carry higher risk to the patient. Pets undergoing general anesthesia should be intubated a cuffed endotracheal tube. This prevents aspiration in case they vomit and makes it possible to breathe for the pet in emergency situations. It also allows them to breathe 100% oxygen and prevents the bacteria being cleaned from the mouth from being aspirated into the respiratory system.

**7.) Will my pet's body temperature be maintained in a safe manner while he or she is under anesthesia?**

Patients start to lose heat from their body just as soon as they are put under anesthesia. This is called hypothermia. The smaller the pet, the faster this occurs. Hypothermic pets recover slower and have more complications from anesthesia than those who are kept warm. Body temperatures are maintained by using external sources of heat while they are under anesthesia. There are many methods used to keep pets warm while they are under anesthesia. Some depend on sophisticated equipment such as water-circulating heating pads, human forced air heaters and computer regulated heating pads. These types are safe in that they do not burn the patient.

**8.) Will specialized equipment such as pulse oximeter, EKG monitors and blood pressure monitors be utilized?**

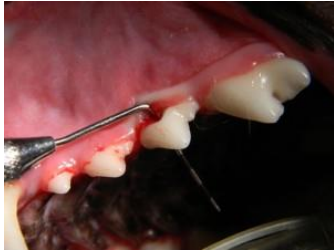
Anesthesia should be monitored closely at all times to ensure an animal's safety and well-being. Quality instruments such as those mentioned above aid staff and veterinarians in detecting changes in a patient's vital signs early and allow them to make adjustments as needed to ensure a safe, smooth anesthesia.

**9.) What about the "dental cleaning" my pet gets at the groomer each month?**

The following is taken from the America Veterinary Dental College website at <http://avdc.org/AFD/>

**Risks of Anesthesia Free Pet Dental Cleanings**

"Anesthesia free" may seem to most like a less risky procedure for your dog or cat than a veterinary dental cleaning under anesthesia. Of course we all love our pets and are nervous about the idea of them going under anesthesia. However, when it comes to pet dental health, the risks of periodontal disease and oral health problems due to lack of proper dental care far outweigh the risk of anesthesia.



*After years of anesthesia free pet dentals, this dog had lost so much bone structure due to undetected periodontal disease the probe goes through the entire jaw. This dog ended up needing 16 teeth extracted as they could not be saved.*

**Consider the following about anesthesia free pet dentals and Periodontal disease:**

- Periodontal disease is the most common clinical condition among adult dogs and cats. Unfortunately, there are often no visible signs of periodontal disease until there is so much damage beneath the gumline that the pet often has bone loss and loses teeth. Anesthesia free dental procedures have no way of cleaning beneath the gumline to prevent periodontal disease, nor are they able to look beneath the gumline to identify problems before they become painful and expensive to treat. **Learn more about pet periodontal disease at <http://avdc.org/AFD/pet-periodontal-disease/>**
- During an anesthesia free dental procedure, the surfaces of your pet's teeth are scaled with an instrument leaving grooves in the pet's teeth and a rough surface prime for the adherence of more bacteria.
- Your pet is very likely uncomfortable and in pain during an anesthesia free dental procedure. A veterinary cleaning allows them to undergo a proper cleaning without any pain or discomfort.
- Painful conditions can't be identified during an anesthesia free pet dental procedure. It is impossible to do x-rays and adequately examine all surfaces of your pet's oral cavity while awake. Radiographs and a veterinary oral health evaluation are vital in detecting problems early while they are relatively easy and much less expensive to treat.
- Anesthesia free dental cleanings give pet owners a false sense of security. Unfortunately, just because their pet's teeth appear whiter doesn't mean they are free from oral disease.
- The cost of an anesthesia free dental procedure is cheaper in the short run. However, pet owners are risking the need for much higher costs to care for severe dental problems that have gone unidentified for a number of years.