



Phone: 356-5524; FAX: 358-4338

Client: {FULLNAME} Patient: {NAME} Date of Release: {CURRENTDATE[SHORT]}

**Homecare Instructions For
The Dental Surgery Patient**

During your pet's convalescence, your pet will need special care. Please watch your pet carefully to avoid problems.

1. Your pet has received IV fluids while under anesthetic. When you return home, **if no vomiting has occurred, offer water in ¼ to ½ cup increments** (depending on your pet's size). When thirst is quenched, return to the usual free choice water (usually within two hours of arrival at home, if not sooner.)
2. Offer food, **about one quarter to one-half the usual amount avoiding overly-rich items**. Offer the second half two to eight hours later. By the next day you may feed normally.
3. If surgery included skin incisions/drains, **do not let your pet lick or scratch at the incisions**. Take note of how the surgery site looks when you pick your pet up from the hospital. If your pet does start to lick or scratch, wrap the area (using a handkerchief, dish towel, stretchy T-shirt, sock, etc.) and call us. If your pet has shown any tendency to lick or chew at sores or incisions, please ask us for an E-collar. Keep the incision/drain area clean of debris by gentle cleansing with warm water and a clean cloth once or twice daily.
4. **Restrict exercise for all post-anesthetic patients**. Increased motion may delay healing and increase the likelihood of complications. Remember, your pet will be convalescing for approximately 7 to 14 days.
5. The effects of sedatives and tranquilizers can last for a few hours to a few days. Variations occur due to age, body fat, and metabolism just as they do in people. If your pet seems sleepy or disoriented, protect your pet from falling off furniture, down stairs, etc. **Be sure your pet is in a quiet place away from the activities of the household**, and keep young children away from your pet until your pet is back to normal.
6. If an emergency develops after-hours, call the **Animal Emergency Center(775-851-3600)**. Report immediately anything that does not seem normal to you: abnormal or unexpected swelling, tenderness, lethargy, poor appetite, bleeding, etc.
7. **In the case of extractions or oral surgery**, a slight tinge of blood in the water bowl after drinking water may be expected for several days. **Feed softened kibble or other soft food for 3-7 days until the mouth heals. If in doubt, give us a call!**

Recognizing signs of pain in your pet: If your pet does not want to eat for the first 24 hours, there might be lingering soreness in the gums. Feed softened kibble to make chewing easier. If the dental required pain meds to be scripted home, give them the prescribed dose as per instructions on pick up.

Further signs of pain:

- Vocalization (groaning, whining, growling, purring)
- Facial expression (dilated pupils, furrowed brow, fixed stare, squinted eyes)
- Body posture (hunched, rigid, abnormal positions)
- Activity (restless, quivering, restricted movement)
- Attitude (aggressive, fearful, timid, comfort seeking)
- Appetite (decreased)
- Urinary and bowel habits (increased urination, accidents in the house)
- Guarding or self-mutilation (licking/chewing/rubbing affected areas, refusal to use affected area)

Recognizing future signs of gum disease: Check to see if your pet has reddened or bleeding gums. This is a sign of gingivitis and can lead to inflammation and infections in the tissues of the mouth and surrounding bone. Bone loss around the teeth leads to tooth loss, and in worst-case scenarios, abscesses. Another symptom may be bad breath in the mouth, secondary to tissue infection and necrosis.

Other symptoms include abnormal chewing patterns, swellings on the face, unwillingness to eat hard foods, drooling or bleeding from the mouth, etc. Often dental problems may be difficult to recognize, as chronic cases allow desensitization to acute pain and they learn to live with it.

Infections in the mouth can spread into the blood and into other organs, causing further issues. If you are not sure about the health of your pet's mouth, it is best to bring them in for an annual exam to verify with us.

Preventative dental health care: It is important to keep your pet's mouth as healthy as possible in-between check-ups. It is recommended to brush your pet's teeth. For this, there are multiple flavored, pet-specific enzymatic toothpastes available. If your pet is resistant to this method, it is best to employ treats that help prevent dental tartar such as kong toys or greenies dental treats. CET chews and sterile shin bones are also great tools. This does not always prevent the build up of tartar, as some pets might not be as enthusiastic about it, but it might slow the escalation to thicker collections. To encourage the use of dental toys, consider small amounts of peanut butter, or stuffing healthy treats inside.

There are also diets available such as Hill's t/d. It is not a replacement diet, but the addition of a few of these kibbles into a regular meal can help gently remove tartar from the teeth.

When considering what type of foods to feed, it is often best to choose kibble over wet food, as it gives the teeth something to scrape against, thus scraping plaque off of the teeth. Wet foods should be used in moderation, to encourage eating or to be given as a treat. Most of the time dry foods are healthier for pet's dental health.

In the case of extractions, animals usually heal very rapidly. Softer foods are encouraged for the first few days after a dental, as the mouth should be more sore or sensitive. If your pet is already on a kibble diet consider softening it with some warm water.

Sutures/Drain to be removed: No__Yes__. If yes, date(s): _____

Date of **Recheck Appointment**: _____

Medications prescribed and When to start: _____

I have been advised of, and understand, the instructions for home care following the discharge of my pet. Signature of Owner/Agent: {CLIENTSIGNATURE}