

Oral Exam and Dental Prophylaxis Process

Wellness Oral Exam

- 1) If the patient is compliant, lift the lip and visualize the gums and teeth. If patient is FAS and it is safe to do so, the owner can lift the lip for you to look in the mouth
- 2) Vocalize problems to the client and note in exam form
- 3) Create treatment plan with the help of TS
 - *Dr. Sands will typically perform the oral exam and voice any abnormalities to her nurse to note in the exam form. With COVID19 and indefinite curbside service we have been taking pictures to send to the owner and add to the patient's chart.*

The Sedated Oral Exam

- 1) Visualize tongue and tonsils when intubating the patient
- 2) Once patient is intubated and under anesthesia, probe each individual teeth the whole way around the sulcus and note the depth if it is abnormal on the patient's dental chart and abnormalities sheet
 - Cat's normal sulcus depth: 0.5-1 mm Dog's normal sulcus depth: 1-3 mm
- 3) Note any mobility, fractures, malocclusion, missing teeth, extra teeth, and enamel defects
- 4) Explain abnormalities found on oral exam to Dr. Sands

Cleaning/Scaling

- 1) Place a folded up gauze scar in the back of the throat to keep the patient from aspirating.
- 2) Start in quadrant 100 and begin removing plaque and calculus from the tooth crown. When using the scaler do not hold the scaler on the teeth in one position, continue moving around the tooth at all times. Do not scale the same tooth for more than 10 seconds. This can cause damage to the tooth.
- 3) Make sure to scale under the gumline. If there is bleeding around the gum line that is a good thing. That means there is debris being removed and the scaling is successful.
- 4) Full scaling should take less than 10 minutes in a feline and less than 20 minutes in a canine

Taking Oral Radiographs

- 1) Patients can be placed sternally, dorsally, or laterally to take oral radiographs based on technician's personal preference and technique.
- 2) Use gauze squares to keep x-ray plate in patient's mouth if needed
- 3) Follow parallel or bisecting angle technique for taking oral radiographs
- 4) Parallel technique is typically used for caudal mandibular premolars and molars
- 5) Bisecting angle technique is typically used of maxillary teeth and rostral mandibular teeth
- 6) The Parallel Technique
 - Place in lateral recumbency with side of interest facing up
 - X-ray plate should be as parallel to tooth of interest as possible
 - The plate should contain the entire tooth from crown to root
 - X-ray machine should be at a 90 degree angle or perpendicular to the film



7) The Bisecting Angle Technique

- Visualize this technique by imagining a person's shadow on a sunny day. When the sun is high in the sky the shadow will be short. If the sun is setting for the day the shadow will be long. When the sun is at a medium height the shadow will be the same length of the person's height. Consider this the same for the bisecting angle technique.
- For maxillary teeth place in sternal recumbency
- For mandibular teeth place in dorsal recumbency
- Picture a line parallel to the plane of the plate and another parallel to the plane of tooth from crown to root. The two lines intersect forming an angle.
- Divide the angle in half and have the x ray beam perpendicular to this line and centered over the tooth being x rayed



8) Do not take more than two tries on one image. If you are having trouble, move on and come back to it.

9) *Hint* Full mouth series in a cat should = 6 images

- 100 quadrant
- 400 quadrant
- Upper incisors
- Lower incisors and canines
- 200 quadrant

-300 quadrant

10) Dr. Sands will review images and label as needed

Charting

- 1) Remove two canine or feline dental charts from the cabinet above the dental table. One chart will go home with the patient and the other will be scanned into the patient's medical record.
- 2) Note abnormalities from oral exam including probing, enamel defects, root exposure, missing teeth, extra teeth and mobility
- 3) Note abnormalities from radiographs on patient dental chart and abnormalities sheet including missing, fractured, discolored, periodontal pockets, gingival recession, and bone loss

Polishing

- 1) Use a polishing tip with individually wrapped prophy paste. Polishing smoothes out defects and removes missed plaque. Make sure to use this along the surface of the tooth and the gumline.

Irrigation

- 1) Use air/water combination to rinse plaque, prophy paste, and any tissue from the mouth

Printing and Saving Dental Radiographs

- 1) Make sure Dr. Sands has labeled radiographs or verbalized what images need labeled before closing and saving radiographs.
- 2) Right click in the black space next to the dental image in the viewer box
- 3) Select print
- 4) Select the grid with four images
- 5) Press print to RICOH printer
- 6) To save radiographs you will follow these same steps but select "Print to PDF" instead of RICOH printer
- 7) A dialog box will pop up asking where you would like to save the file to
- 8) Name the file the patient's first and last name
- 9) On the left select desktop
- 10) Save the file to desktop
- 11) Open evet in internet tab
- 12) Go to patient record
- 13) Go to medical images tab
- 14) Upload file from desktop and name "Dental Radiographs"
- 15) File will be saved in medical record
- 16) Delete file from desktop after saving

Resources:

<https://www.dvm360.com/view/putting-your-complete-dental-prophylaxis-steps-proceedings>

<https://www.aaha.org/search/?q=dental+prophylaxis>

<https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=4951286>

Epica Animal Health Dental Webinar by Dr. Jennifer Mathis

<https://todaysveterinarynurse.com/articles/take-a-bite-out-of-dental-radiology-positioning-for-picture-perfect-views/>