

## DID YOU KNOW that 'anaesthesia - free dentistry' procedures are a risk to your pet?

Some people are now advertising what they call 'anaesthesia-free dentistry' for pets. This involves cleaning and scaling of a pet's teeth whilst the animal is fully conscious. As a pet owner, please be aware that this poses a serious risk to your pet, for a number of reasons:

The animal must be physically restrained, which can lead to significant anxiety for the pet. Also, as the animal is conscious, it will be fully aware of any pain involved with the procedure. The pain caused will not only be stressful for your pet at the time but can also lead to longer term anxiety, and aversion to being touched around the face and muzzle.

'Anaesthesia-free dentistry' is frequently only cosmetic, as removal of the visible tartar on the tooth surface does not address underlying dental disease. Cleaning the visible surface above the gum line makes the teeth appear 'clean' but will not detect dental disease that is present below the gum line, and thus provides no medical benefit. It is only by removal of the disease-causing bacteria, and their waste products, from the pockets around the teeth, that the disease process can be halted. This is an uncomfortable procedure even for humans who understand what is happening!

Sadly, animals may still have significant dental disease and remain in pain after a superficial 'anaesthesia-free' clean, and owners may not realise that their pet is still suffering with dental disease.

It is impossible to adequately examine all surfaces of your pet's oral cavity whilst they are awake. In addition to this, X-rays are often required to assess your pet's teeth for underlying issues, and can only be performed by a veterinarian whilst your pet is anaesthetised. A thorough veterinary oral health examination is vital to detect problems early, allowing the best possible treatment outcome.

### What's the answer?

Only a veterinarian can properly examine, diagnose and treat dental disease in pets.

Your veterinarian will use a general anaesthetic to ensure they can complete a systematic and thorough inspection of every single tooth, probe the pockets surrounding the tooth and check for, and treat, underlying disease.

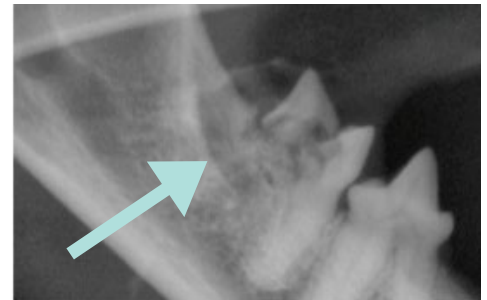
General anaesthesia ensures that the experience is a positive one for your pet because it is unaware of the pain during the procedure and doesn't need to be physically restrained.

Dental disease is common in Australian pets. If untreated, it can be painful and lead to chronic health concerns.

Speak to your vet today about the importance of good oral health, and regular dental check-ups for your pets.



Right mandibular molar of cat with gingivitis, with a relatively normal looking crown.



X-ray of the same tooth showing extensive root and crown lysis (feline resorptive lesion - a painful condition requiring surgery).



Dog's upper left carnassial tooth before probing.



The same upper left carnassial tooth after dental probing. There was minimal calculus before cleaning, but a very painful fracture was present.