

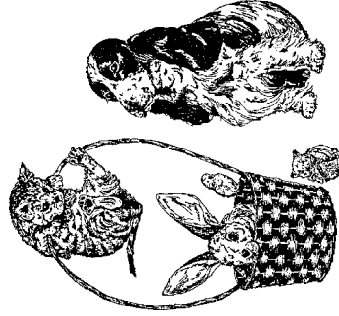
Whilst it is possible to perform major and complex orthodontic procedures in animals this can rarely be justified. **The aim of treatment is to provide the animal with a comfortable, functional bite.**

**The majority of orthodontic problems are hereditary.** If orthodontic treatment is performed in pedigree animals the breed society or other appropriate authority must be informed as the animal's conformation will be altered masking an inherent feature.

## **Jaw Fractures and Intra-oral Appliances**

Accidents or neglect of the teeth can result in jaw fractures. These may be stabilised by external or internal device. For healing to progress infection, including dental plaque, needs to be controlled. Intra-oral devices trap food and fur, further increasing plaque retention, so extra oral hygiene measures are required.

**During treatment with intra-oral orthodontic appliances or dental splints these should be examined and cleaned at least twice daily.** Always follow instructions closely. Failure to do so may lead to pain, infection and irreversible damage, even loss of teeth. NEVER increase the tension of a device above the recommended level. If in doubt, ask the vet!



## **DaCross Services**

*Please note that Mr Crossley and his associates are only available for consultations when arrangements are made through your normal veterinary surgeon.*

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## **ADVICE ON DENTAL CARE**

from

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### **Routine home dental care**

Dogs and cats accumulate plaque on their teeth within hours of them being cleaned. The plaque bacteria produce enzymes and toxins which damage the gums leading to gingivitis and periodontal disease. This is the commonest cause of tooth loss in animals, the same as it is in people. Bacterial acids are also responsible for causing caries cavities, an increasingly common problem in pet dogs. If left uncontrolled, gum disease will progress with infection and bacterial toxins then entering the body, increasing the risk of serious heart, liver and kidney problems.

After a while plaque deposits become stained and mineralised forming unsightly calculus. The rough surface of calculus then encourages further plaque buildup.

**Periodontal disease, and many other tooth problems can easily be prevented by instituting an effective oral hygiene program.**

Using a combination of a diet which requires prolonged chewing with thorough toothbrushing will maintain teeth and gums in a healthy condition. The daily use of a correctly designed soft bristled toothbrush, with a suitable toothpaste, is the only proven method for long term plaque control. Another important aspect associated with toothbrushing is to examine the mouth and teeth every day so that problems are seen early.

**Remember that time and patience will be required when introducing toothcare to your pets.**

Regular dental checkups by your vet, at least every six months, are advised so that home care can be assessed and any problems detected and dealt with as early as possible. Occasional tooth scaling and polishing may be required even when regular oral hygiene measures are in use.

**With a little help all pets should have sweet smelling breath and a full set of healthy teeth throughout their lives.**

## Additional Dental Home Care

Additional hygiene measures may be required in some animals, either because they have particular problems or are undergoing treatments which interfere with the natural protective mechanisms in the mouth.

Antibiotics are often prescribed for short term use to help reduce oral infection before, during or after treatment. It is particularly important that medications are administered as instructed. If this is not possible then the veterinary surgeon must be consulted.

Mouth washes, oral rinses and sprays are commonly used in combination with other methods of oral care. Along with ointments and gels, they are most effective for treatment of localised areas of infection, inflammation or injury.

### The Avulsed (knocked out) tooth!

If an otherwise healthy tooth is knocked out, as sometimes happens in accidents, it may be possible to reimplant the tooth provided the delicate root surface is not badly damaged.

1. *Only handle the tooth by the shiny crown surface,*
2. *Rinse it briefly in luke warm water, then immediately*
3. *Place it in a small container of cold milk*
4. *Contact the vet (or the dentist if it is your tooth) immediately.*

Reimplantation, splinting and later root treatment may save the tooth.

### The Fractured tooth!

Surface damage is not necessarily serious, however exposure of dentine, the inner structural part of the tooth, causes sensitivity or pain depending how close to the pulp it is. Fractures into dentine can be filled using modern bonded dental materials. Teeth with deeper fractures exposing the pulp (which is extremely painful until the nerves eventually die) require endodontic treatment before surface fillings or crowns can be placed. Fracture permanently weakens a tooth increasing the risk of refracture at a future date.

## Endodontic Root Treatments

Root treatments, including pulp capping, are intended to help maintain teeth with a damaged and/or infected pulp.

Pulp capping techniques are most often used in treating pulp exposure due to fracture or surgical shortening of an immature tooth. The superficial (infected) pulp is removed, a dressing is applied to the remaining pulp, and a surface filling placed. In such cases it is hoped that the pulp will stay alive. If not, either a full root treatment or extraction will be necessary.

Full root treatments involve removing all the pulp from a tooth and replacing it with an inert filling material after thorough preparation, cleaning and disinfection of the pulp cavity. A surface filling or fillings are then placed. In this case the tooth will be dead, but the root attachment will remain healthy providing a suitable home dental care programme is used.

Whilst the vast majority of root treatments are highly successful, it is quite possible for infection to flare up after treatment. **It is advised to watch for signs of pain or discomfort, swelling or discharge around the tooth and its root(s).** Should these occur, additional medication may be required. In some cases the root filling may need removing and the pulp cavity re-treating or where there are other complications surgical access to the root tips may be a better alternative.

With all endodontic treatments longer term complications are also possible, so radiographic followup is essential. Generally this is initially done at 4-6 months post treatment, and if all is well, 1 year later, then every 1-2 years throughout the animals life.

It is important to remember routine tooth care as it would be a shame to loose an endodontically treated tooth through preventable periodontal disease!

## Orthodontics

The assessment of orthodontic problems involves checking each segment of the jaw as in many cases what appears as a minor discrepancy at the front of the mouth is caused by a more significant abnormality elsewhere. In addition to physical examination, x-rays and study models will probably be required to allow for a proper assessment.