

Orthodontics in Pets

What!!!??? I know it sounds silly. However, the use of orthodontics in veterinary dentistry is a lot more common than one might think. Although we would like our pets to be attractive, the use of orthodontics is not for pretty smiles. Orthodontics is primarily used to correct a painful, or potentially infectious, malocclusion (an abnormal or unhealthy relationship between jaws).



These malocclusions are caused by skull shape, the change in skull size and symmetry can cause crowding, tooth on tooth contact or contact with the palate or lower jaw.

Often a primary, or “baby”, tooth will not emerge on time - this causes the adult tooth/teeth to shift to an abnormal, and very potentially, uncomfortable position.

The most common orthodontic procedure is interceptive orthodontics. This is where the tooth causing trouble is extracted to relieve the impact, or the tooth can be shortened to stop its contact as well.



Braces or orthodontic appliances are often made to move specific teeth slowly and safely to their expected position. Unfortunately general anesthesia is needed for the application and the maintenance of orthodontic appliances.

Most of these conditions are identified early on at puppy well-care visits. Action can be taken early to relieve pain and correct inability to chew properly.

Talk to your Veterinarian or Veterinary Technician about scheduling a pediatric puppy oral assessment to evaluate potential threats.



A GREAT TIP when scheduling your puppy/kitten for their spay/neuter: while your pet is already under anesthesia, let us use that wonderful opportunity to take dental radiograph assessments of their mouth. This allows us to account for adult dentition and to ensure bite functionality.

Brush your pet's teeth every day! Schedule oral hygiene visits with your vet often and monitor healthy chewing and eating habits to identify subtle signs of pain or infection.

Healthy Smiles and Wags,

Kevin Leroy

Veterinary Dental Technician

