



Questions to Ask Before the Dental

A one-page prompt for the pre-dental conversation: bloods, x-rays, consent, pain relief and cost

PETSLIKEMINE
TEETH & MOUTH

PET NAME

VET PRACTICE

DENTAL DATE

A dental is a full surgical procedure whose scope only becomes clear once your pet is asleep and every tooth has been x-rayed and probed. Here are the questions worth asking beforehand; take this in and write the answers down.

PRE-ANAESTHETIC BLOODS

Do you recommend pre-anaesthetic blood tests for my pet, and why for her in particular?

They check the kidneys and liver (which clear the drugs), the red cells (oxygen) and clotting (for the extraction wounds). Most valuable with age, illness, medication or a longer procedure.

X-RAYS: SEEING THE DISEASE YOU CANNOT

Are full-mouth dental x-rays included, and will you take them of every tooth?

Most painful dental disease hides below the gumline: about one dog in four and four cats in ten have a problem in a normal-looking tooth. A clean without x-rays is half a job.

THE EXTRACTION AND CONSENT CONVERSATION

If teeth need to come out once she is asleep, how will you contact me, will you ring before extracting, and how many might be involved?

The plan often changes mid-procedure, the first time anyone sees the whole mouth. A tooth comes out only to remove pain or infection.

PAIN RELIEF AND ANAESTHETIC SAFETY

What is the plan to keep her comfortable and safe, and how is she monitored while asleep?

Expect nerve blocks, pain relief on the day and medication to take home, with a nurse watching throughout. In healthy pets anaesthetic death is about 1 in 2,000 (dogs) and 1 in 900 (cats), smaller still today. Age is not a disease.

ONE THING TO AVOID, NOT ASK FOR: ANAESTHESIA-FREE DENTISTRY

"Anaesthesia-free" cleaning by a groomer or pet shop is not a cheaper dental. It reaches only the visible crown, cannot touch the disease below the gumline, and by making a diseased mouth look clean it can delay the treatment that helps. Sub-gingival scaling by a non-vet is also unlawful in the UK. It is not a substitute for a proper dental.

THE MONEY PART

Can I have an itemised estimate, and what is in the base price versus added on the day?

A base procedure (anaesthetic, monitoring, clean) with x-rays and extractions on top, so an honest quote is a range. Ask whether x-rays are in or out. If cost is a worry, ask about payment options rather than leaving a painful mouth untreated.

ESTIMATE GIVEN (RANGE)

X-RAYS INCLUDED?

WHO TO CALL ON THE DAY

Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet's instructions.

How to use. Ask these before the day, write the answers here, and keep it with your estimate. A complete dental means anaesthetic, full-mouth x-rays, probing every tooth, cleaning above and below the gumline, and treatment where the x-rays show it is needed. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

ASK IF X-RAYS ARE INCLUDED; A CLEAN WITHOUT THEM IS HALF A JOB