

CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Dental Examination and Treatment

What will be the timeline of my horse's visit?

This depends on the presenting condition and planned treatment, but we will keep you updated on the anticipated timeline:



- Day cases: Cases which require less invasive treatment, such as endodontics, diastema widening, or more simple extractions, may be performed as day cases with admission in the morning and discharge later that afternoon/evening
- Standard procedures: Most cases, such as tooth extraction, require a moderate to heavy sedation, so although the procedure is often completed on a single day, horses normally stay for at least 24 hours for monitoring.
- Extended hospitalisation: Cases requiring extensive work or other disease (e.g. sinusitis) may require a longer hospital stay. This is typically 3-7 days.

If computed tomography (CT) imaging is required (please see CT FAQs), this will sometimes be performed the day before treatment to allow time for assessment of images and surgical planning

What do I need to do to prepare my horse for his/her visit to the Hospital?

There is no specific preparation for dental cases. Please see the general list of FAQs for further information on preparing for a visit to the hospital.

Which diagnostic tests will be performed on my horse during the visit?

This depends on your horse's presenting signs and suspected diagnosis but may include:

- CT (See CT FAQs): CT imaging (a series of x-rays that produces 3D images) is often used to assess the teeth and associated structures.
- Oral examination: This involves external assessment of the jaws, manually feeling within the mouth and visual examination.
- Oroscopy: Using a camera placed within the mouth to assess the visible surfaces of the teeth.
- Other tests such as x-rays, ultrasound, sinuscopy (placing a camera into the sinuses) and bacterial culture may be used in specific cases depending on findings.



What treatment will my horse have during their stay?

Equine dentistry now covers a wide variety of procedures; planned treatment, as guided by diagnostic findings, will always be discussed with you prior to procedures being performed. These include:

- Endodontics (fillings): these are performed when vulnerable areas of the tooth are exposed but removal of the tooth is not indicated at this stage
- Periodontal treatments (diastema flushing, widening or filling): this is when gaps between the teeth cause food to pack between the teeth; this is often followed by gum disease. A variety of different treatment options, including making the gaps between the teeth wider, are used to manage this condition.
- Tooth extraction can be performed in four different ways. Where possible, oral extraction is attempted first:
 - Oral extraction: The tooth is removed from within the mouth using a variety of instruments designed to aid in stretching the attachments and loosening the tooth with minimal damage to surrounding structures.
 - Minimally invasive transbuccal extraction (MTE): This technique uses a small incision in the cheek and specialist instruments to aid extraction of complex dental material, such as tooth fragments, under oroscopic and x-ray guidance
 - Repulsion: This is only used when necessary. The procedure involves using an instrument to push the tooth out, via the mouth. This is sometimes performed under general anaesthesia.
 - Buccotomy: This is only used when necessary. The procedure involves removing the bone around the tooth to facilitate removal. This must be performed under general anaesthesia
- Routine rasping: where necessary a routine float will also be performed to correct any sharp points or overgrowths.

Most procedures are performed under standing sedation and local anaesthesia. To facilitate the delicate nature of the work, moderate to heavy sedation is often required and some procedures can last for several hours due to the time required to gradually break down the attachments of a tooth. Therefore, horses are always monitored closely for colic afterwards and where necessary steps taken to reduce the likelihood of this occurring. Where patients are not compliant or a complex procedure is necessary, general anaesthesia may be indicated but this will always be discussed with you first.





Is there anything I need to prepare at home before my horse leaves the Hospital?

Most horses can return to their normal management after dental procedures. When we are happy your horse is ready to go home, discharge instructions will document what has been performed, what you and your vet need to do, and what to look out for. Both you and your normal vet will receive a copy when you collect your horse.



After my horse comes home what veterinary care will be required?

Depending on the procedure performed this may vary from reassessment only, to changing of dental socket packing, or removal of sutures. All horses with dental conditions (including previous conditions) are likely to require regular ongoing dental assessment every 4-6 months.

Will my horse require medications when they come home?

Your horse will likely be dispensed a short course of anti-inflammatory pain relief and, if there are concerns regarding the potential for ongoing infection, a course of antibiotics. Both medications will be given by mouth or in feed and instructions on dose and frequency will be in your discharge instructions.

Will my horse require a special diet when they come home?

Depending on diagnosis and treatment we will occasionally recommend a specific diet. We will try to ensure this is discussed prior to discharge. Often maximising grass turnout is ideal for dental related issues.

