



# West Coast Veterinary Dental Services

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN YOUR PET IS HAVING AN ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

The purpose of this brochure is to inform the client of the course of events they may expect during orthodontic treatment, and to point out potential risks or problems that may be encountered during or after treatment. Orthodontic treatment usually proceeds as planned and excellent results are achieved. However, like all other healing arts, **results cannot be guaranteed.**

### BEFORE TREATMENT STARTS

- In most cases, before determining a treatment plan, plaster models of the teeth, radiographs, photographs and medical history are obtained. Based on these, as well as an oral examination and an evaluation of patient temperament, a treatment plan is prepared.

### TREATMENT PROGRAM

- Orthodontic treatments generally require the use of appliances to move the teeth by exerting gentle pressure. Added to the braces, there may be rubber bands and elastic ligatures.
- The normal period of treatments usually last 3 – 12 weeks. Monitoring often requires rechecks and adjustments during the treatment. At the end of treatment it is sometimes necessary to take further radiographs and photos.
- A thorough clean up of the affected teeth is always performed.

### REMOVAL OF TEETH

- While no one likes to remove teeth, if it will enhance the stability and functional results, extraction's may be recommended as part of the treatment.

### YOUR COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL

- Generally excellent orthodontic results can be obtained with co-operative, informed clients and quiet patients. To get the best results, the **client must maintain good oral hygiene, feed a proper diet, restrict any chewing of hard objects and keep regularly scheduled appointments.** A lack of co-operation in any of these areas could result in serious setbacks or even failure of treatment.

### POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- Cavities
  - Orthodontic appliances do not cause cavities, but because of their presence food particles are retained more readily and the cavity potential is thereby increased.
  - This can be controlled by proper diet, good tooth brushing and regular check-ups. It is important to brush teeth daily, if brushing is not possible at a given time one can use a chlorhexidine solution rinse or even water in a syringe or a water pick to flush the mouth clean. Loose bands or brackets greatly increase the cavity potential so the client should check the appliance daily.
  - **If a band or a bracket comes loose the patient should be seen as soon as possible.**

- Root Resorption
  - This condition is a blunting of the root tips that may occur to varying degrees during orthodontic treatments. It is usually mild and does not affect the health or longevity of the teeth. It is difficult, if not impossible to predict which animal is susceptible to root resorption. The incidence increases with prolonged treatment.
  - It should be noted that not all root resorption arises from orthodontic movement; trauma, cuts, impactions, endocrine disorders, some diseases or idiopathic (unknown) reasons can also cause root resorption.
  
- Injuries from Appliances
  - The metal braces and wires have attachments that project a few millimetres out from the teeth, so a blow to the mouth or cheeks may result in the inside of the lips or cheeks being cut. In most instances, the braces actually protect the teeth and stabilize them from a severe blow to the mouth. Loose or broken wires and bands can irritate or scratch the cheeks, gums or lips.
  - If this occurs, call the hospital so the problem can be corrected.
  
- Swollen Gums
  - In some areas of the mouth the braces may impinge or press on the gum tissue. This is usually not a problem, but if the client does not brush well in the area, the gum tissue may become reddened and swollen. Daily brushing or rinsing is required to reduce the swelling and the soreness.
  - If the problem persists or gets worse do not hesitate to contact the office.
  
- Relapse Tendencies
  - Relapse, as used here, describes a movement of the teeth back toward their original positions after the braces have been removed. It is probable that all patients will experience at least some movement of the teeth once the braces have been removed. It is difficult to determine how much movement will occur. Experience seems to indicate that the more ideal the end result, the less likely the chances or relapse.
  
- Loss of or Damage to the Appliances
  - Because we are dealing with dogs and cats whose chewing habits and jaw strength do not match that of humans, for whom the various appliances were designed in the first place, **no warranty exists.** Dr. Rochette, Dr. Legendre and this hospital accept no responsibility for the appliance once the patient has left the premises.
  - **Therefore, broken or lost appliances will be replaced at the owner's cost.**

#### A FINAL WORD

This brochure attempts to inform the client of the general procedures and potential difficulties associated with orthodontic treatment. Because each patient is uniquely and wonderfully individual, such a brochure can only generalize. I will make every effort to discuss and explain the specifics of your own pet's treatment in detail. **Understanding and co-operation are absolutely essential for the results that both the client and orthodontist seek.**