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THE DENTAL PROCEDURE

1. Check-in: You bring your friend in and check in with our receptionist. Our receptionists will discuss the treatment plan with you so that we both agree as to what procedures are to be performed. If you do not understand something please ask questions so that we avoid any misunderstanding. (5-10 minutes/receptionist)

The treatment plan given at this time is a very rough estimate because, until the patient is under anesthesia and the teeth are cleaned and x-rayed, it is impossible to know what additional work will need to be performed.

2. A technician will bring your friend from the reception area into the treatment area where procedures begin. (5 minutes/kennel tech)

3. At this point we will perform the following tasks prior to anesthetizing them: (15-30 minutes/ 2-3 techs+veterinarian)

- * We begin with a record, history, and check-in document review.
- * If bloodwork has not been performed recently we perform it at this time. This ensures we detect any abnormalities that would complicate anesthesia.
- * In older or at risk pets we may perform chest x-rays and an electrocardiogram for the same reasons noted above.
- * A physical exam is performed.
- * A intravenous catheter is placed to administer drugs and fluids to support vital organ function and to aid in helping maintain adequate blood pressure.

Your pet is now ready for anesthesia.

4. Anesthesia (1 to 4 hours/1-2techs + veterinarian)

- * We begin anesthesia with Pre-anesthetic combination of drugs that helps your pet relax and begins a pain blocking process.
- * Next we inject a drug that will render-them safely unconscious so that we can place an endo-tracheal tube into their trachea which allows the anesthetic gas to reach the lungs which will keep them asleep for as long as we need to perform the procedure.
- * At this point safety monitoring and supportive measures begin:

We monitor:

- * Heart rate and rhythm
- * Blood pressure
- * Temperature
- * Respirations
- * Signs of pain or discomfort
- * In higher risk patients we may monitor CO2 gases to gauge anesthetic depth.

We provide:

- * Warming measures to keep them warm. Cold patients can become painful and low body temperature can complicate anesthesia.
- * Pain medications if necessary to prevent wind up pain and minimize any pain created by the procedure
- * Intravenous fluids to keep their vital organs perfused and maintain healthy blood pressure. This facilitates quicker, smoother recoveries and provides the safest anesthesia possible.
- * Padding to lie on for comfort.

Now we are ready to perform the dental procedure.

5. The dental procedure

(1-2 hours for basic cleaning, polishing, x-raying, evaluation/1-2 techs+Veterinarian)

Proper tooth **Cleaning** can only be performed under anesthesia. Under veterinary supervision a skilled technician will clean the entire surface of each tooth including below the gumline which is critical so that the tartar and calculus is fully removed. Tartar and calculus left behind serves as a seed to rapidly re-populate the mouth with infection.

Polishing is also critical because it removes the grooves and scratches created by the cleaning tools. If these grooves are not polished out dental infection, tartar and calculus return at a faster rate. Additionally polishing removes microscopic amounts of tartar and calculus that cannot be seen with the naked eye.

X-rays (full mouth) The importance of this step cannot be over stated! It is absolutely essential to fully evaluate each tooth above and below the gumline. It is astonishing the number of painful abnormalities we find in what appears to be a healthy tooth above the gum line.

- * We clean, polish, evaluate, and map one side.
- * We reposition them to the other side.
- * We clean, polish, evaluate and map the other side.

It is at this point that we re-consider our treatment plan. Now we have an accurate idea as to what each tooth needs and we can better predict what the additional costs will be. During check in you will have chosen what you would like us to do at this point.

Your choices are:

1. Contact you at the number provided before any treatments/procedures are performed.

You will be given 15 minutes to call back. If no contact is made, your pet will be woken up from anesthesia without any treatments/procedures performed.

2. If the treatments/ procedures will not exceed the high end of the treatment plan, you do NOT need to contact me. I authorize all treatments/procedures up to the high end of the treatment plan.

3. I authorize the Veterinarian to do anything necessary for my pet (relative to the procedures your pet is here for today) even if it exceeds the high end of the treatment plan. I understand that payment for all treatments/procedures will be due at time of pick up.

6. Common dental procedures necessary at this point.

(30 minutes to 3 hours/ 1-2 techs + Veterinarian)

1. **Extractions**: unhealthy teeth need to be extracted or they will continue to cause pain, tissue and bone destruction and will infect the neighboring teeth. Extracting teeth and suturing the gum back over the hole created by the missing tooth is time consuming and requires patience and diligent technique. Once the tooth is removed we also must x-ray the site again to ensure the entire tooth was removed.

2. **Dental nerve blocks and additional pain relievers**: even under anesthesia when it is necessary to extract teeth we need to inject numbing agents into the mouth to block pain. This lessens the amount of general anesthesia we need and it allows for a more comfortable recovery.

3. **Bonded sealants**: minor fractured teeth that are not severe enough to be extracted need to be sealed to prevent them from becoming infected in the future.

4. **Deep pockets** will be injected with an antibiotic paste that will help heal the infection.

5. At times additional **Specialty procedures** are necessary that are beyond what we can perform here in our clinic. These procedures might need to be performed at a future appointment by a Veterinary Dental Specialist. We are fortunate to have such a specialist near by in Carbondale.

7. Additional procedures requested by you:

If you need any additional procedures to be performed please be sure to let us know in advance of the scheduled dental date because we must ensure we have scheduled enough additional time for the procedure.

- * Lump removals
- * Ear cleanings
- * etc.

8. Complimentary procedures:

(5-10 minutes/ 1 tech)

- * Basic ear exams (deep cleanings, diagnostics, and treatments would be at an additional cost).
- * Toe nail trims
- * Express anal glands

9. Recovery environment.

Once all of the procedures are performed we then wake the patient up in a safe, comfortable, monitored environment.
(15-30 minutes/1-2 techs)

We develop and implement a plan for the following:

(15-30 minutes/1-2 techs+Veterinarian)

1. Pain management at home if necessary.
2. Antibiotic therapy if needed.
3. Any additional treatments or recheck exams

10. Discharge

(15-30 minutes/1 tech +kennel tech+veterinarian+receptionist).

A staff member will call you with an update and give you an estimated discharge time
We record all we have done and prepare documents to go home at discharge
We prepare instructions for your pet's at home care
We monitor recovery and remove the catheter
Our team discusses the work we have performed, goes over discharge instructions and collects fees.

As you can see this is a complicated process requiring multiple staff members, lots of time and extensive resources. The entire Veterinary Industry and we at Amigo Animal Clinic believe this process is the safest and the only effective way to keep your loved one's mouth healthy and as pain free as possible for their entire life.