

Veterinary Dentistry

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Introduction

Performing dentistry on animals falls within the scope of practice of veterinary medicine. The knowledge acquired during the course of veterinary training qualifies veterinarians to provide both preventive oral care and dental treatment to an animal. Dental care in veterinary medicine involves the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders of the teeth and associated structures. Competent and safe performance of dentistry requires extensive knowledge of anatomy, anesthesiology, pharmacology, physiology, pathology, radiology, neurology, medicine, and surgery. In particular, when practising veterinary dentistry on companion animals, the performance of intraoral radiography is an integral component of a complete assessment.

Definition

Veterinary Dentistry: Veterinary Dentistry is a discipline within the scope of veterinary practice that involves the professional consultation, evaluation, diagnosis, prevention, treatment (nonsurgical, surgical, or related procedures) of conditions, diseases, and disorders of the oral cavity and maxillofacial area and their adjacent associated structures¹.

¹ Canadian Veterinary Medical Association [Position Statement – Veterinary Dentistry](#). Published October 21, 2022



Practice Expectations

A veterinarian who provides dental services to any animal meets the *Professional Practice Standard: Veterinary Dentistry* when they:

1. Diagnose and determine a treatment plan through direct assessment of the animal. Include or recommend radiography in the assessment as indicated.
2. Administer species and procedure appropriate sedation and/or general anesthesia in combination with appropriate analgesics.
3. Delegate a dental procedure under the following circumstances:
 - (i) the veterinarian is confident that the auxiliary staff has the education and experience to perform the procedure;
 - (ii) the veterinarian is available on site to provide direct supervision to the competent auxiliary;
and
 - (iii) the veterinarian confirms that the delegated procedure was correctly performed by re-examining the entire oral cavity on completion of the procedure.
4. Do not delegate the examination of the teeth and/or oral cavity needed to make an assessment, develop a diagnosis and/or formulate a treatment plan.
5. Do not delegate extraction procedures.
6. Use appropriate dental charting.

Other Considerations

“Dentist” and “dental surgeon”, as defined in the *Dentistry Act*, are protected titles. Veterinarians should not use these or any similar titles in reference to themselves (e.g., veterinary dentist, equine dentist).



Legislative Authority

Veterinarians Act, R.S.O. 1990, s. 1(1), 11(1), 11(5)

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093: General s. 18, 19, 21 (*Veterinarians Act*)

Dentistry Act, S.O. 1991, c 24, s. 9

Resources

The following can be found at the College's website at cvo.org:

1. *Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent*
2. *Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent*
3. *Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records*
4. *Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records*
5. *Professional Practice Standard: Delegation*

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website (www.cvo.org) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.