



College of Veterinarians of British Columbia

Professional Practice Standard¹: Veterinary Dentistry (Companion Animals)

Published October 2018; modified May 2020ⁱ

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 preventive oral care and dental treatment to animals.

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.

Definitions

Veterinary dentistry: Veterinary dentistry involves oral health care procedures in any animal species including all aspects of evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and prevention of any and all diseases of the teeth, oral cavity, mandible, and maxillofacial area and adjacent structures. (Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, January 2018)

Companion animals: For the purpose of this Professional Practice Standard, “companion animal” does not include equines.

Non-Surgical (or Closed) extraction: Extraction of teeth without the creation of a gingival/mucogingival flap; with or without tooth sectioning or removal of interproximal crown tissue. Can progress to requiring a surgical extraction technique if complications arise.

Surgical (or Open) extraction: Extraction of teeth after a gingival/mucogingival flap creation and alveolectomy

Alveolectomy: Removal of some or all of the alveolar bone

Practice Expectations

A veterinarian who provides dental services to any companion animal(s) meets the *Professional Practice Standard: Veterinary Dentistry (Companion Animals)* when he/she:

¹ Council approved the ‘Professional Practice Standard: Veterinary Dentistry (Companion Animals)’ on October 12, 2018; modification approved May 29, 2020

1. Diagnoses and determines a treatment plan through direct assessment of the animal and includes radiography in the assessment as indicated. Registrants performing surgical dental extractions must have the capacity, within the facility, to perform dental radiographs at the time the procedure is undertaken. This expectation will go into effect as of January 1, 2019.
2. Administers species- and procedure-appropriate sedation and/or general anesthesia in combination with appropriate analgesics.
3. Delegates a dental procedure under the following circumstances:
 - a. The veterinarian is confident that the employee has the education and experience to perform the procedure.
 - b. The veterinarian is available on-site to provide appropriate supervision to the competent employee; and
 - c. The veterinarian confirms that the delegated procedure was correctly performed by re-examining the entire oral cavity on completion of the procedure.
4. Does 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. Does not delegate extraction procedures.
6. Uses appropriate dental charting.

Other Considerations

“Dentist” and “dental surgeon” are reserved titles, under the Dentists Regulation of the *Health Professions Act*. Veterinarians should not use these, or similar, titles in reference to themselves (e.g. “veterinary dentist”, “equine dentist”, etc)

Legislative Authority

Veterinarians Act, SBC 2010, s. 1, 3(2)(b), 46(1), 46(2), 47(2)

Acknowledgement

Adapted with permission from the College of Veterinarians of Ontario’s “*Professional Practice Standard: Veterinary Dentistry*” (March 2015).

Definitions related to extractions are adopted from the American Veterinary Dental College (AVDC), www.avdc.org

Versions

October 2018 – original version approved by Council and published

¹May 2020 – inclusion of definitions for surgical and non-surgical extractions, and alveolectomy