

# Blue Ravine News

YOUR PET'S HEALTH IS OUR CONCERN

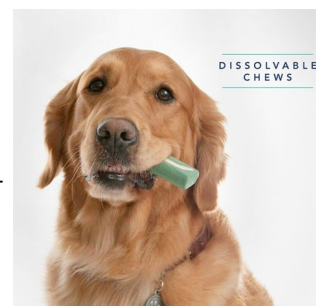
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## Pet Dental Health Matters!



And February, National Pet Dental Health Month, is the perfect time to focus on your pet's dental health. Remember, poor dental health can impact a pet's quality of life, lead to systemic illnesses, and even shorten their lifespan. So don't wait!

Here are the top 3 reasons why dental care is so essential for our pets:

### 1) Poor Dental Health Can Impact a Pet's Quality of Life

Dogs and cats with painful dental problems often stop eating, lose weight, and experience reduced energy. They may also become anxious, withdrawn, aggressive, or exhibit other behavioral changes.

Extractions and dental surgery can help improve a pet's quality of life by relieving pain and restoring their ability to eat and chew normally. If your pet is experiencing dental problems, don't wait to get them help. Contact your veterinarian to discuss your options.

### 2) Dental Disease Can Lead to Systemic Illnesses in Pets

Unfortunately, it's not just your pet's mouth that's at risk when they have dental disease. Bacteria from the mouth can spread to other parts of the body, leading to systemic illnesses such as kidney or liver disease.

Regular dental care is essential for preventing these serious health problems. Extractions and dental surgery can help remove infected teeth and tissue and improve a pet's overall health.

### 3) Good Dental Care Can Help Pets Live Longer, Healthier Lives

Bad dental health in pets is linked to poor overall health, but the opposite is equally true: good dental care can help your pet live a longer, healthier life.

Preventive dental care is one of the simplest and most effective ways to keep your pet healthy. By following a good dental hygiene routine and taking them for regular checkups and cleanings, you can help ensure that they stay healthy for years to come.

**Signs that plaque exists:** Persistent bad breath in dogs can be a sign of plaque and calculus buildup.

A healthy canine mouth should have pale pink gums that have a knife-like edge where they meet the tooth surface. An unhealthy mouth has a distinct look—

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## Pet Dental Health Matters! (cont'd.)

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and odor.

When you clean your dog's teeth at home, you use the mechanical action of applying a dog toothbrush's bristles to his teeth to remove food, bacteria and plaque before it hardens, calcifies and turns into tough-to-remove tartar.

Plaque is easily brushed away and takes about 48-72 hours to harden and calcify. Once it's calcified, it needs to be scraped off by a professional.

You can find a range of products designed especially for keeping your dog's teeth clean and their mouths fresh. Some of them even clean a dog's teeth without brushing. The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC®), [www.vohc.org](http://www.vohc.org), maintains a list of products for dogs and cats that meet VOHC's Standards for effectiveness in retarding plaque and tartar .

**Dog toothbrushes** — a child or adult toothbrush with soft bristles — are the gold standard for dog oral care. A dog finger toothbrush is a small brush that slips over your fingertip so you can use your finger rather than a handled brush to clean your pal's teeth.

**Dental Food and Food Additives:** Dog dental food comes in special kibble shapes and sizes that help scrub plaque from a dog's teeth. Some brands also come with highly palatable ingredients that reduce stains and buildup of bacteria. Other food additives are packed with enzymes and supplements and are simply sprinkled on food.

**Dental Chews** not only clean teeth, they create a barrier against plaque, calculus and bad breath. They taste delicious to dogs, and they help to mechanically scrape the tooth surface, kind of like a dog toothbrush would. They especially help in the back of the dog's mouth where they do all their chewing,

Other companies have **Plaque Prevention Gels** that, used once a week or as directed by your veterinarian, will significantly reduce the formation of plaque and tartar.

Blue Ravine Animal Hospital can help you to assess your pet's situation and recommend the best course of action, including any dental products you are considering trying for your pet friend.



## Your Pet May Need A Leptospirosis Vaccination

**What is Leptospirosis?** Leptospirosis in dogs is a bacterial infection that spreads through the bloodstream. Dogs can get leptospirosis from puddles or bodies of water that carry urine from infected wildlife or from heavily irrigated pastures. The bacteria infiltrate a dog's body by burrowing into their skin. It can be a serious, life-threatening disease.

**How Do Dogs Get Leptospirosis?** Dogs typically contract leptospirosis through direct contact with urine from an infected animal. If your dog swims in, passes through, or drinks infected water, or if they come into contact with infected soil or mud, they are at risk.

The dogs most at risk for getting canine leptospirosis include hunting and sporting dogs, dogs that live near wooded areas, dogs that live on or near farms, dogs that have spent time in a kennel.

**Leptospirosis Can Spread to People and Other Pets.**

The *Leptospira* spirochete bacteria can be transmitted to humans and other animals from an infected animal. Children are most at risk of acquiring the bacteria from an infected pet.

People and pets can be infected and not yet show symptoms. Your veterinarian will be especially cautious when handling your pet and will strongly advise you to do the same. Protective latex gloves must be worn at all times, and all body fluids will be treated as a biologically hazardous material.

**What are the Symptoms of Leptospirosis in Dogs?** There are many: Sudden fever and illness, sore muscles; reluctance to move, stiffness in muscles and legs; stiff gait, shivering, weakness, depression, lack of appetite, increased thirst and urination, jaundice, spontaneous cough, and difficulty breathing.

**How Will Your Veterinarian Test Your Dog for Leptospirosis?**

Your veterinarian will take a thorough history of your dog's health, including a background history of symptoms, recent activities, and possible incidents that might have precipitated this condition. The history you provide may give your veterinarian clues as to what stage of infection your dog is experiencing, and which organs may be affected.

Your veterinarian will order blood tests, a urinalysis and electrolyte panel.

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# Blue Ravine Animal Hospital Offers Acupuncture as an Alternative Treatment for Managing Pain

Acupuncture has been around for centuries and can be a better alternative to managing a dog's or cat's pain.

Acupuncture involves inserting needles into certain points of the body where nerve bundles and blood vessels intersect. Through placement in these energy channels, the needles enhance blood circulation and stimulate the release of hormones which encourages the body to correct imbalances.

Veterinary acupuncturists are licensed veterinarians with extra training in acupuncture.

Your veterinarian might do the sessions in the office or give you a referral to another provider.

## How Can Acupuncture Benefit My Dog or Cat?

1. **Pain management** is one of the most common uses for acupuncture, often in conjunction with a more traditional treatment plan. Strong medical treatments like chemo, which can cause discomfort, are often paired with acupuncture to help make a pet more comfortable and able to fight the illness.
2. **Musculoskeletal problems** such as arthritis, hip dysplasia, or nerve injuries can respond to acupuncture. It is often employed during rehabilitation after an injury. Carefully monitoring a healing pet is important; without the feeling of pain, a dog can re-injure him or herself with over-activity.
3. **Skin problems** like allergic dermatitis, granulomas, or hot spots may respond well to acupuncture treatment because increased circulation can improve healing, while pain reduction will reduce a dog's over-grooming or itching responses.
4. **Gastrointestinal problems** like nausea and diarrhea can be aided by the increased blood flow from acupuncture. It may also help normalize digestive activity by stimulating digestive secretions.
5. **Respiratory problems** like asthma and allergies can benefit from the immune-calming, anti-inflammatory capabilities of acupuncture.

There are many different things that pet acupuncture can be effective for: Arthritis, joint disease, metabolic disease, indigestion, allergies, separation anxiety, trauma-related pain, and inflammation are all examples of common canine ailments that can be improved with acupuncture. It can also relax mental anguish, discomfort, and fear as an immediate effect.

This alternative therapy, while effective, may not be right for every pet and will not cure every condition. It is not recommended for acute conditions such as infections and some pets might not cooperate when an acupuncturist wants to insert needles and have the pet remain still during a 20-minute session.



Massaging trigger points -- called acupressure -- can be a good alternative for pets that dislike needles. In addition, laser therapy, a noninvasive treatment that uses light to improve blood circulation and regenerate cells, is an option for pets with significant pain.

**Is your pet a good candidate for acupuncture?** Acupuncture might not be the best option for older pets or those with serious illnesses or injuries. It is most effective for pets with orthopedic conditions such as arthritis and back

pain.

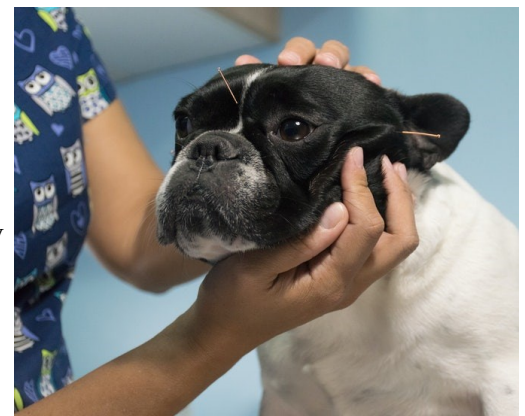
Acupuncture is virtually painless for small animals, and many owners find their pets become relaxed or even sleepy when the needles are in place. Feelings like tingling or numbness have been noted in human acupuncture patients, so some animals may show small amounts of discomfort from the new sensations. A new development in animal acupuncture is the use of lasers instead of needles for a completely painless experience.

**How long will it take to get results?** The number of sessions your pet may need to find relief depends on the diagnosis. In general, improvements come after three to four sessions.

**What other therapies might help?** Veterinary acupuncturists might recommend electro-acupuncture, which sends mild electric currents through the needles for more stimulation, or they may suggest herbal supplements to complement acupuncture and speed healing.

Keep in mind that if you choose to try acupuncture, it is considered by most vets to be a supplementary treatment to traditional medical care. Always work closely with your veterinarian

to develop the treatment plan that's right for you and your dog. Contact Blue Ravine Animal Hospital to discuss Acupuncture treatment further--Dr. Winters will be glad to assess your situation.







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## Leptospirosis—(Continued from page 2)

### What's the Treatment for Leptospirosis in Dogs?

Dogs with acute severe disease should be hospitalized. Fluid therapy will reverse any effects of dehydration. If your dog has been vomiting, an anti-vomiting drug, called an antiemetic, may be administered. Antibiotics will be prescribed by your veterinarian, with the type of antibiotic dependent on the stage of infection, for a course of at least four weeks.

### Dogs Recovering From Leptospirosis at Home

As your dog recovers from a leptospirosis infection, you will need to be prepared to ensure strict crate rest. While your dog is being treated, you also need to take precautions to protect yourself and your family. Keep your dog away from other pets and children. Wear latex gloves when handling your dog in any way, or when handling fluid or waste products from your dog.

Gloves and a mask should be worn during any cleanup process.

### Prevent Leptospirosis in Dogs:

Consult with your veterinarian to see if your pet is a candidate for the vaccine. The lepto vaccine for dogs covers only certain strains of leptospirosis, so is not 100% guaranteed effective in all cases. Leptospirosis is under-diagnosed, so it's very important to speak with your veterinarian about current recommendations for the disease and vaccine in your area. We consider Lepto a core vaccine recommended for most dogs in our area.

Call 916-984-0990.



## BLUE RAVINE OFFICE HOURS

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm; Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, closed.  
For emergencies outside regular office hours, please call MarQueen Pet Emergency & Specialty, 916 757-6600 or Sacramento Veterinary Referral Center, 916 362-3111.

[www.blueravineanimalhospital.com](http://www.blueravineanimalhospital.com)

## FREE DOG TOY with 1-year purchase of Heartgard or NexGard!



To purchase your 1-year Heartgard or NexGard call  
**Blue Ravine Animal Hospital:**  
**916-984-0990**  
Coupon expires March 31, 2022

BLUE RAVINE ANIMAL HOSPITAL  
1770 Prairie City Rd., Folsom, CA.