

Blue Ravine News

YOUR PET'S HEALTH IS OUR CONCERN

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California Law: Patient Care and Prescription Refills

Did you know that the State of California requires that veterinarians must establish a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) prior to providing any diagnosis, treatment, therapy, or cure for your pets? This is probably more than anyone wants to know, but the law is found in the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 2032.1.

What does this mean? It means that a VCPR, office consultation, must be established for each and every condition that is treated within a one-year period. In other words, we must see you and your pet for every health ailment. And, to clarify further, if we see your pet in January for an ear infection and prescribe antibiotics, we cannot give antibiotics in May to the same pet for a skin condition.

Additionally, according to the law, under no circumstances can a veterinarian provide a medication for a patient for a given condition for a period longer than one year. If we are treating your animal with a heartworm preventative, it is only possible to give up to 1 year of medication prior to the animal being seen again to provide more medication. And the ONLY time a veterinarian can dispense medication for “one year” is in relation to a single condition. At their discretion, veterinarians often provide a limited amount of medication such as a 5- or 10-day supply depending purely on the pet’s complaint. If a condition is

likely to show improvement or healing within a 10-day period, a recheck is necessary when that time period is up to reassess the situation.

For all of the above reasons it is very important for clients to keep up with scheduling a pet’s exams.

We try to forewarn clients verbally and with email reminders about a pet’s exam status to avoid any complications. Sometimes life intervenes and even with the best intentions you are unable to come in prior to the expiration of the annual exam but, unfortunately, this means we cannot prescribe for your pet without venturing outside the law and facing repercussions. We would be unable to fill even life saving or chronic medications if your pet’s exam is overdue.

This sounds both complicated and inconvenient and we apologize, but we must comply with the laws of the California Veterinary Medical Board. We are asking for your understanding and cooperation in scheduling your exams taking into consideration the one-year timeline and other restraints under the law.

Please note that the same annual exam requirement applies to prescription diets for your pet.

Our goal is to continue to provide the best care possible for all of your pets. Please call our staff at 916-984-0990 to schedule your next appointment.



CA.gov—Dept. of Consumer Affairs, Veterinary Medical Board

Common Pet Dental Health Questions Answered

It's National Pet Dental Health Month, and veterinarians know that daily dental care for pets is far more than a cosmetic issue. Daily dental care is important defense against periodontal disease, the most common cause of bad breath in dogs and cats.

Caused by plaque and tartar buildup, periodontal disease can cause tooth loss and oral lesions. Periodontal disease can also have a secondary effect on certain body organs (such as the heart, kidneys, and liver) and cause or exacerbate organ system diseases.

According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, more than 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some form of dental disease by age three.

To help pet owners with pet dental care questions and help pets avoid the risks of periodontal disease, here are some questions to consider about pet dental health:

Are dental problems the same for people and pets?

No. For people, tooth decay (or cavities) is the most common dental problem. Tooth decay represents less than 10% of all dental problems for dogs. The majority of dental problems for dogs and cats are caused by periodontal disease.

What causes plaque and tartar to form and how does this cause periodontal disease?

Similar to your mouth, your pet's mouth is home to thousands of bacteria. As bacteria multiply on the surfaces of teeth, they form an invisible layer called plaque (or bio-film). While some plaque gets removed by your pet's tongue and chewing habits, some remains.

If allowed to remain and build over time, plaque thickens and mineralizes to become tartar. This tartar accumulates both above and below the gum line, leading to inflammation (gingivitis) and further accumulation of plaque, which can lead to periodontal disease.

How can I help prevent plaque and tartar buildup?

Certain types of chew toys and treats may help reduce or delay plaque and tartar buildup, and some pet foods have been specifically formulated as dental diets that mechanically and/or chemically assist in plaque control. (Bones, antlers, and other hard chew toys are not recommended as they can cause fractures and chips to teeth.) Water additives are also available. Yet daily tooth brushing is the best defense against tartar buildup.

Can I use a toothpaste formulated for humans?

Absolutely not. You should never use human toothpaste to clean your pet's teeth. Toothpaste contains ingredients that

can cause intestinal problems for pets if swallowed, and some toothpaste contains xylitol.

As a sugar substitute, xylitol is safe for human consumption. Yet for dogs, xylitol can be lethal. Xylitol is rapidly absorbed into a pet's bloodstream and can cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), liver failure, seizures, and even death in dogs.

You should also avoid using baking soda to clean your pet's teeth. Baking soda has a high alkaline content, which can upset the acid balance in your pet's digestive tract if swallowed.



To safely clean your pet's teeth, specially formulated pet toothpastes are available. Pet toothpastes are non-foaming, safe to swallow, and are available in pet-appealing flavors, including poultry and beef, which help train your pet to look forward to daily dental care.

Will tooth brushing remove tartar that has already built up?

Once tartar has formed, you will need to take your pet to your veterinarian for professional scaling and polishing, done under a general anesthesia.

Do I have to make an appointment for my pet to have a dental scaling

and polishing?

Yes. Your veterinarian will examine your pet for underlying or related disorders and perform preanesthetic bloodwork prior to the procedure.

What happens during a professional dental cleaning for my pet?

Your veterinarian will start the dental procedure by placing your pet under a general anesthesia and perform a careful, in-depth dental examination sometimes followed by dental x-rays. X-rays are often recommended, as just like with people, there may be problems below the gum line that can only be identified with x-rays. A cleaning without x-rays is a missed opportunity to improve your pet's health and quality of life. Following the x-rays, the scaling and polishing can begin.

In the case of advanced periodontal disease, where tooth roots are exposed, extractions may be needed.

Since it's impossible for your veterinarian to predict the extent of dental disease before doing a thorough oral examination of your pet while under anesthesia, your veterinarian may contact you during the dental procedure to discuss the care that is needed or any new findings along the way.

Why Depending on the Internet to Diagnose a Sick Pet May Be Dangerous

Imagine this scenario: It's midnight and your pet just vomited up who-knows-what and appears restless. What is the first thing you'll likely to do? Honestly?

If you said search Google for sick pet symptoms, you would be one pet owner among many. And, while online pet health information can be informative, the problems of relying on online information to diagnose your pet are many and may put your pet's health at risk.

Imaginary Veterinary Expertise of Dr. Google

Pet health websites have exploded over the past decade. Some of them are credible, such as the AVMA and AAHA sites, and can benefit pet owners with practical at-home pet care; especially in the areas of preventative wellness, nutrition, exercise, and overall pet health tips.

However, attempting to make a diagnosis based on visible symptoms and online pet health information is a gamble.

In order to diagnose a pet's symptoms, a veterinarian needs to look at several factors, via:

- A thorough physical examination
- Inquiry into any household or dietary changes
- Your pet's medical history
- Blood tests, among other things.

Through this careful screening process, the most likely or common health conditions are ruled out until a diagnosis is determined.

Another issue with attempting to diagnose your pet based on outward symptoms alone, is that many symptoms are indicative of multiple diseases or illnesses. For example, vomiting is often a symptom of a gastric upset; which can be a result of something as simple as a change in diet, or something as serious as poisoning. Because the variables are too numerous to address with online information alone, it's safer and more effective to use veterinary medicine and the tools and technologies of advanced veterinary care to diagnose and treat pet illnesses.

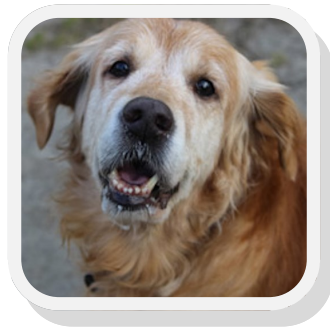
How to Respond to a Sick Pet or Pet Health Emergency

One of the most empowered approaches to helping your pet during sickness or sudden illness is to know the red flag warnings of a possible pet emergency. In some cases, you simply have a feeling that your pet is in distress. In this case, go with your intuition and seek veterinary care immediately. Many quick-to-act pet guardians have prevented serious health issues from becoming fatal by following their intuition.

When it comes to a sick pet, we view any of the following symptoms as a pet health emergency:

- Bleeding that doesn't stop or bleeding from the

mouth, nose, ears, or anus



- Choking, gagging, or difficulty breathing
- Heat stroke or hyperthermia
- Broken or fractured bones
- Fall from great height or trauma from car accident or animal attack
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea
- Seizures
- Refusal to eat or drink water
- Signs that your pet is in distress or pain
- Unconsciousness

If your pet experiences any of these emergencies, please, close your computer and contact us immediately.

Reputable Educational Resources

There are some advantages to online pet health information, such as finding the Pet Poison Helpline number:

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control> National Animal Poison Control Center or call 1-888-426-4435 for assistance or the nearest after hours emergency veterinary clinic.

There are also some incredible pet first aid resources out there such as the **Pet First Aid App** from the American Red Cross which can be found at the Apple App Store, Google Play, or Amazon Marketplace. **But, when it comes to your pet's health, the safest approach to diagnosis and treatment is professional veterinary care.**

For your **non-emergency** pet care needs, you can find a number of articles on improving your pet's quality of life and health through nutrition, exercise, parasite prevention, and many more pet owner empowering topics at the sites below. We hope you'll take the time to explore this extensive pet education collection and the associated pet care videos.

- Veterinary Partner at www.veterinarypartner.com
- Healthy Pet, part of the AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association), at www.healthypet.com
- The University of Illinois, which has one of the most extensive databases on the Internet – <https://www.library.illinois.edu/vex/>
- The American Veterinary Medication Association (AVMA) – www.AVMA.org
- The Merck Veterinary Medical Manual, a concise and reliable animal health reference, at <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/>

We remind you that the links and materials offered here are intended for educational purposes only. Blue Ravine Animal Hospital does not provide any veterinary medical services or guidance via the Internet.

Please call Blue Ravine Animal Hospital (916-984-0990) today if your pet has a symptom or illness that needs attention.



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**February: Pet
Dental Health**

BLUE RAVINE OFFICE HOURS

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm; Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.
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

Pet Dental Health Month

**Receive \$40 Off A
Professional Dental Cleaning**

(Limit: one [1] per family)

BLUE RAVINE ANIMAL HOSPITAL
1770 Prairie City Rd., Folsom, CA. 916-984-0990



All of our dental packages include radiographs, sevoflurane anesthesia, pulse oximeter monitoring, ultrasonic cleaning, and fluoride polishing supervised by the veterinarian.

Extractions, antibiotics, and specialty procedures are available at an additional charge.

Coupon expires March 31, 2020