

IT REALLY HURTS ORAL PROBLEMS ARE PAINFUL

Pain is not just about how it feels, but how it makes you feel.

Key points

- 1. Animals feel pain** but often do not show their suffering.¹
- 2. Dental disease** is considered one of the most common causes of **chronic pain** in dogs and cats.²
- 3. Oral disease** and its associated **pain** are **serious welfare issues** for veterinary patients and need to be treated.³
- 4. Pain management** is a matter of ethics and welfare but should also be treated as a strategy to re-establish organ function and accelerate discharge from the hospital.²

Recognition of oral pain

1.

Cats with oral disease demonstrate anorexia (complete or partial), intense oral discomfort, weight loss, sialorrhea (drooling) and poor grooming.⁴

2.

Animals with oral and dental disease may experience oral/dental pain which will impact their nutritional status and quality of life.⁵

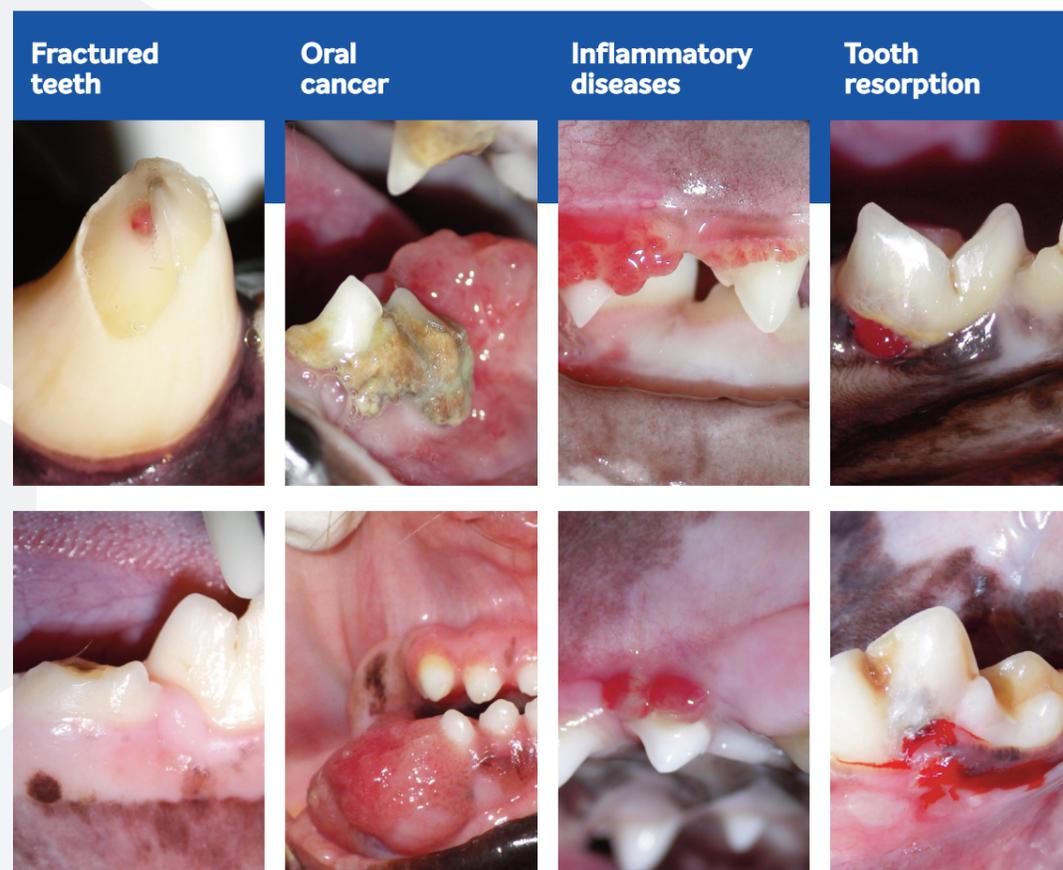
3.

Pain often alters animals' behaviour and causes absence of normal behaviour (like grooming) and presence of new behaviours (like aggression).⁶

Oral pain management: multifactorial action

- 1. Painful oral diseases must be identified and treated;** they must not be neglected. A complete oral cavity assessment includes both a conscious and sedated examination and diagnostic imaging (dental radiographs or cone beam CT).
- 2. Prevention of procedural pain** is an important focus of the veterinary dentist. Any procedure suspected to create pain should result in appropriate pain management.
- 3. Appropriate pain management in dentistry** includes pre-emptive analgesia, requires an adequate treatment plan, involves ideally minimally invasive dental surgery techniques, and is followed by implementation of an individualized pain management protocol.
- 4. Pain is a complex phenomenon** - therefore, pain management very often requires multimodal actions and consultations as well as an individual approach with regards to duration of treatment and recommended medications.

Examples of common painful oral diseases:



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