

THE TRUTH ABOUT NON-ANESTHETIC DENTALS



Keeping your pet's mouth healthy is about more than just a bright smile. While procedures that claim to clean a dog or cat's teeth without anesthesia might sound appealing, they come with significant limitations and risks that many pet parents don't realize.

WHAT “ANESTHESIA-FREE” CLEANINGS ACTUALLY DO

Non-anesthetic dental procedures generally involve restraining a conscious pet while visible tartar is scraped from the surface of the teeth. Because the animal is awake, the provider can only access the parts of the mouth they can see and reach easily. There's no way to thoroughly examine the entire oral cavity, remove buildup below the gumline, take dental X-rays, or perform periodontal probing — all of which are essential to identify and treat real dental disease.

WHY THAT MATTERS

Most serious dental problems — like periodontal disease, abscesses, root infections, and bone loss — develop below the gums. A superficial cleaning may make teeth look cleaner, but it does nothing to halt or reverse disease where it matters most. Without anesthesia, a complete oral assessment simply isn't possible.

THE HIDDEN RISKS

Stress and discomfort: Restraining a conscious pet for a dental procedure can be stressful and even painful. Sharp dental instruments inside a struggling animal's mouth increase the risk of accidental injury.

- **Missed disease:** Without full access below the gumline, serious problems can go undiagnosed, leading to more extensive treatment later.
- **False sense of security:** Whiter-looking teeth may mask ongoing disease and delay proper care.
- **Risk of aspiration:** Without an endotracheal tube, bacteria, plaque, or fluid can enter the airway and lungs, potentially causing aspiration pneumonia.

WHY ANESTHESIA IS STANDARD

General anesthesia allows veterinary teams to perform a comprehensive oral exam, take full-mouth dental radiographs, clean above and below the gumline, safely treat disease, and protect the airway — all while keeping pets comfortable.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Consistent home care, including regular brushing and routine veterinary exams, plays an important role in your pet's dental health. Talk with your veterinarian about the safest and most effective dental care plan for your pet.