

American Veterinary Dental College Position Statement



Veterinary Dental Healthcare Providers

The American Veterinary Dental College (AVDC) has developed this position statement as a means to safeguard the veterinary dental patient and to ensure the qualifications of persons performing veterinary dental procedures.

Primary responsibility for veterinary dental care

The AVDC defines veterinary dentistry as the art and practice of oral health care in animals other than man. It is a discipline of veterinary medicine and surgery. The diagnosis, treatment, and management of veterinary oral health care is to be provided and supervised by licensed veterinarians or by veterinarians working within a university or industry.

Who may provide veterinarian-supervised dental care

The AVDC accepts that the following health care workers may assist the responsible veterinarian in dental procedures or actually perform dental prophylactic services while under direct, in the room supervision by a veterinarian if permitted by local law: licensed, certified or registered veterinary technician or a veterinary assistant with advanced dental training, dentist, or registered dental hygienist.

Operative dentistry and oral surgery

The AVDC considers operative dentistry to be any dental procedure which invades the hard or soft oral tissue including, but not limited to, a procedure that alters the structure of one or more teeth or repairs damaged and diseased teeth. A veterinarian should perform operative dentistry and oral surgery.

Extraction of Teeth

The AVDC considers the extraction of teeth to be included in the practice of veterinary dentistry. Decision making is the responsibility of the veterinarian, with the consent of the pet owner, when electing to extract teeth. Only veterinarians shall determine which teeth are to be extracted and perform extraction procedures.

Dental Tasks Performed by Veterinary Technicians

The AVDC considers it appropriate for a veterinarian to delegate maintenance dental care and certain dental tasks to a veterinary technician. Tasks appropriately performed by a technician include dental prophylaxis and certain procedures that do not result in altering the shape, structure, or positional location of teeth in the dental arch. The veterinarian may direct an appropriately trained technician to perform these tasks providing that the veterinarian is physically present and supervising the treatment.

Veterinary Technician Dental Training

The AVDC supports the advanced training of veterinary technicians to perform additional ancillary dental services: taking impressions, making models, charting veterinary dental pathology, taking and developing dental radiographs, performing non surgical subgingival root scaling and debridement, providing that they do not alter the structure of the tooth.

Tasks that may be performed by veterinary assistants (not registered, certified, or licensed)

The AVDC supports the appropriate training of veterinary assistants to perform the following dental services: supragingival scaling and polishing, taking and developing dental radiographs, making impressions and making models.

Tasks that may be performed by dentists, registered dental hygienists and other dental health care providers

The AVDC recognizes that dentists, registered dental hygienists and other dental health care providers in good standing may perform those procedures for which they have been qualified under the direct supervision of the veterinarian. The supervising veterinarian will be responsible for the welfare of the patient and any treatment performed on the patient.

The AVDC understands that individual states have regulations that govern the practice of veterinary medicine. This position statement is intended to be a model for veterinary dental practice and does not replace existing law.

Adopted by the Board of Directors April 1998, revised October 1999, revised September 2006