



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARD

Veterinary Dentistry

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Introduction

Performing dentistry on animals falls within the scope of practice of veterinary medicine. The knowledge acquired during the course of veterinary training qualifies veterinarians to provide both preventive oral care and dental treatment to animals.

Dental care in veterinary medicine involves the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders of the teeth and associated structures. Competent and safe performance of dentistry requires extensive knowledge of anatomy, anesthesiology, pharmacology, physiology, pathology, radiology, neurology, medicine and surgery.

Definition

Veterinary dentistry: Veterinary dentistry involves every aspect of oral health care procedures including but not limited to the cleaning, adjustment, filing, extraction or repair of teeth and treatment of or surgery to related structures. (Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, July 2011).

Practice Expectations

A veterinarian who provides dental services to any animal(s) meets the *Professional Practice Standard: Veterinary Dentistry* when he/she:

1. Diagnoses and determines a treatment plan through direct assessment of the animal. Includes or recommends radiography in the assessment as indicated.

2. Administers species and procedure appropriate sedation and/or general anesthesia in combination with appropriate analgesics.
3. Delegates a dental procedure under the following circumstances:
 - the veterinarian is confident that the auxiliary staff has the education and experience to perform the procedure;
 - the veterinarian is available on site to provide direct supervision to the competent auxiliary; and
 - the veterinarian confirms that the delegated procedure was correctly performed by re-examining the entire oral cavity on completion of the procedure.
4. Does not delegate the examination of the teeth and/or oral cavity needed to make an assessment, develop a diagnosis and/or formulate a treatment plan.
5. Does not delegate extraction procedures.
6. Uses appropriate dental charting.
7. Performs routine dental procedures, when carried out in a veterinary hospital or clinic that are located in permanent facility, in a room separate from surgical space.

Other Considerations

“Dentist” and “dental surgeon”, as defined in the *Dentistry Act*, are protected titles. Veterinarians should not use these or any similar titles in reference to themselves (e.g., veterinary dentist, equine dentist).

Legislative Authority

Veterinarians Act, R.S.O. 1990, s. 1(1), 11(1), 11(5)

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093: General s. 18, 19, 21 (*Veterinarians Act*)

Dentistry Act, S.O. 1991, c 24, s. 9

Other References

The following can be found at the College's website at www.cvo.org:

Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent

Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent

Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records

Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records

General Principles of Delegation, Position Statement

The following reference informed the development of this Professional Practice Standard:

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, [Veterinary Dentistry – Position Statement](#), July 2011

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website (www.cvo.org) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.