



A pain in the tooth!

Horses suffer from all of the dental conditions that we do, as well as many of their own. If you have ever experienced dental pain then you know how severe and debilitating it can be. However horses will often suffer in silence because they are prey animals and don't like to show signs of weakness.

A common misconception is that horses will show signs of dental disease. In fact, some horses will show no sign that there is a problem until the disease is advanced. DON'T leave it until then to do something about it!



What does equine dentistry involve?

Sedation

Sedation is a very important part of equine dentistry. Only with sedation can thorough oral examination and treatment be performed. Not sedating is not only dangerous and distressing for the horse, the dental examination and treatment won't be very good either.

Dental examination

A mouth speculum (or gag) is placed on and the horse's mouth is thoroughly rinsed out to allow for a proper examination, and just like your dentist, every surface of each tooth is examined. This requires a mirror (a long mirror!) and a light source. After examination, an explanation of any problems is given and a full dental chart will be written.

Treatment

Commonly sharp enamel points will be removed. This is called 'floating'. Sharp enamel points usually develop on the outside of the upper cheek teeth and on the inside of the lower cheek teeth. These sharp points can cause cheek and tongue ulcers which can be very painful for the horse. Other abnormalities commonly found are hooks and periodontal disease which the veterinarian will discuss with you and treat appropriately.

How often should horses have a dental?

Regular dentals should be performed to ensure that your horse's mouth remains comfortable and disease free. Horses and ponies under 6 years of age should have dentals every six months, over 6 years of age every 12 months, and over 20 years of age every six months. Even horses with good mouths need regular dentals to identify problems early.

If you have any further questions about the dental health of your horse, please contact our Equine Dental Vet Dr Camille on **07 5424 1299**