

November 2018 Equine Newsletter

Equine Dentistry

Why does it matter?

Horses, like people, feel pain in their mouths but as prey animals don't always make it obvious. The only way of really evaluating a horse's teeth is generally to sedate them, put a gag on to open their mouth and properly examine it with a light and mirror to enable us to see everything.

What signs might a horse show if they have dental issues?

- Your horse might drop bits of food.
- Your horse might be losing weight.
- Your horse might be difficult to bend or resistant to the bit.
- Your horse may go off their hard food.
- There may be lumps on your horse's jaw.
- Your horse may not want to be tacked up.
- Your horse may have bad breath.
- They may be eating slowly.
- They may be packing food in their cheeks.
- They may have poorly digested food in their faeces.

Or they may not show any signs at all and may not alert you to their discomfort!

How old does a horse need to be to have dental issues?

Horses of any age can have dental issues. It is worth starting regular dental checks from your horse's first year of life. Younger horses can have issues losing their caps so it is definitely worth getting them regularly checked. It is also often harder as an owner to spot dental issues in younger horses if they are not old enough to be in work as there will be less behavioral changes to look for.

How often should be horse have a dental?

We usually recommend your horse has a dental every 12 months however young horses or those in competition work are likely to require 6 monthly checks. Others may need to be re-examined more frequently if any dental issues are identified.

What is the difference between an equine dentist, an equine dental technician and an equine vet who does dentistry?

It will come as no surprise that we feel an equine vet with the proper kit and training in equine dentistry is the MOST appropriate person to be examining and treating a horse's mouth. All equine vets can do dentistry and at Summerleaze we make sure all our vets can perform equine dentistry to a high standard.

Stuart has additional qualifications in dentistry passing the BEVA/BVDA Equine Dental Technician examination in 2010. In 2015 he was awarded the RCVS Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice in Equine Dentistry, becoming one of a very small number of RCVS Advanced Practitioners in Equine Dentistry in the UK.



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Anyone can refer to themselves as an equine dentist or equine dental technician (EDT) without any additional qualifications, so it is important if using an equine dentist to check whether they are UK qualified or not. An easy way of checking is to look at the British Association of Equine Dental Technicians website www.baedt.com and at the World Wide Association of Equine Dentistry at wwaed.org.uk. Anyone not on these lists is not legally capable of using motorized tools or doing anything beyond rasping small sharp points by hand.

The main difference between using equine dentists/EDTs to using a vet is that there is a lot of restriction on what the dentists can do versus the vet. In order to sedate a horse a vet is required and wolf tooth removal requires constant supervision by a vet. The only things that dentists/EDTs who are not qualified can legally do is the manual removal of small dental overgrowths and sharp enamel points with hand instruments. Those that are qualified can legally do more however for tooth extractions, diastema treatment, fillings or similar procedures your horse will need to be referred to a vet.

Why do vets often sedate horses for dental treatments?

In order to actually look at every surface of your horse's teeth a gag, a mirror and a light are needed as not all dental issues can be felt by hand. Potential problems that can cause issues and pain for your horse can be missed if the horse won't let us look at their mouth properly. Even for a simple dental rasp of sharp points where no other problems exist, we can do a far better job with an electric rasp rather than a hand rasp. Although some horses will allow us to use the electric rasp without sedating many will not and may prevent us from doing the best job we can if they aren't sedated.

Practice News

Summerleaze Client Meeting

Worried about what to do in an emergency?

Not sure what to do if someone falls off?

Unsure about what to do with an injured horse?

Equine Specific First Aid Course!

Thursday 8th November 18:30 at Summerleaze Farm and Equine [get to grips with some equine first aid tips and practice your bandaging skills!](#)

Followed by

Thursday 22nd November 18:30 at Coombefield Veterinary Hospital [get a chance to learn how to deal with horse related human injury!](#)



Total cost of first aid course is £50
(including both evenings and VAT)

Spaces are limited so advanced booking is required!

Please contact us via email summerleaze@summerleaze-vets.co.uk or call us on 01297 304007

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