



## American Veterinary Dental Technician's Statement Regarding Non-Anesthesia Dentistry

Written by: Benita Altier LVT, VTS (Dentistry)

Adopted by: Executive Board of AVDT: February 27, 2018

Reviewed by: Executive Board of AVDT

Annual Review: Due March 1<sup>st</sup>

As veterinary technicians we stand to uphold basic animal welfare considerations: prevent and minimize animal suffering, pain, stress, fear and to allow animals to express their natural behaviors.

Non-anesthesia dentistry is facilitated by physical rather than chemical restraint of patients to cosmetically scrape dental tartar from the crowns of teeth. When a pet is physically restrained and sharp dental instruments are used, the likelihood of this procedure causing fear, discomfort and pain is high. Consequently, the pets' natural behavior when put in this situation would be to stop the fear inducing and possibly painful procedure by struggling to get away, biting, scratching or freezing in fear. This natural reaction by the pet is both a human and animal risk of harm or serious injury that Veterinary Technician Specialists in Dentistry are not willing to undertake or support.

Additionally, dental disease is known to be largely un-detected due to the lack of professional evaluation of the oral cavity under general anesthesia. Only through a thorough clinical oral examination, charting of findings as well as a diagnostic set of radiographs of the patient's full dentition and supportive bone structures, will we recognize the presence or absence of disease.

Non- anesthesia dentistry does not support the ability to obtain a comprehensive full mouth examination and dental radiographs. Non-anesthesia dentistry does not allow a veterinary professional the opportunity to evaluate and clean the teeth below the gum line or treat disease. Conditions such as: tooth fractures, tooth resorption, tooth mobility, infection of the surrounding bone, periodontal disease, tooth developmental abnormalities, malocclusions and oral tumors are commonly found in our patients. These painful conditions are largely unrecognized before disease has reached a critical level and treatment options are limited.

The AVDT does not support sub-standard dental care to any animals through non-anesthesia dentistry by our members, candidates or the profession as a whole. The AVDT respects and supports the human animal bond, fear-free practices and professional dental and oral care provided only with the pet under general anesthesia.

This statement is substantiated by the following organization's research and positions regarding the humane and proper oral care of animals world-wide.

<http://avdc.org/AFD/>

<http://www.wsava.org/guidelines/global-dental-guidelines>

<http://www.ava.com.au/node/85991>

[https://www.aaha.org/public\\_documents/professional/guidelines/dental\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.aaha.org/public_documents/professional/guidelines/dental_guidelines.pdf)