



Dentistry – advice for adopters

Who is this handout for? This handout is for those considering adoption of a cat that has had a dental examination. Dental treatment may have been given while in Cats Protection's care or an adopter may have been advised to seek follow up treatment at a later date.

As the UK's leading feline welfare charity Cats Protection rehomes around 45,000 cats through our centres and branches each year.

Each cat that comes into our care has a thorough physical examination by a veterinary surgeon upon arrival. The examination includes looking at the cat's teeth, gums and mouth to see if the cat has any signs of dental disease that requires dental treatment.

The vet will particularly look for:

- severe gingivitis/stomatitis (inflammation of the gums/mouth)
- broken or loose teeth
- feline resorptive lesions (painful cavities in the teeth)

These conditions can cause bleeding, ulceration, infection, growths and mouth pain. Therefore while in Cats Protection's care, the necessary therapeutic dental procedures will be undertaken under general anaesthetic in order to protect the welfare of the cat and to allow them to have a pain-free mouth.

Unfortunately, due to the high number of cats we take into our care we are unable to provide prophylactic dental care – in other words, treatment to prevent dental disease. This means any cat with mild to moderate dental disease in the absence of any dental discomfort will not receive dental treatment.

Cats Protection policies differ slightly from the average veterinary practice as a practice which may advocate preventative treatment in all aspects of cat healthcare. At our centres and branches, we do not perform preventative dental procedures, not only because of the cost involved, but also to avoid further avoidable stress to our cats while they are housed in rescue care. Similarly, additional procedures can add to the time the cat must spend in rescue care before rehoming, which can negatively impact the welfare of the cat.

It is our policy that potential owners should be informed of a cat's dental status prior to homing.

Each cat that is adopted goes home with medical advice, outlining any relevant information about the status of the teeth and whether the cat has had any dental treatment in our care.

Any further treatment, once you have taken your new cat home, will be a decision you will make with your own vet upon examination of your cat. Please be aware that pet insurance companies are very variable as to their dental coverage and we recommend that you discuss the level of dental insurance available to you with your policy provider.