

Why Does My Pet Need an Anaesthetic for a Dental When the Groomer Doesn't?

Family Matters

One of the questions we hear most often is:

"My groomer cleans my dog's teeth without an anaesthetic. Why does my vet recommend one?"

It's an excellent question, and the answer comes down to one simple difference:

A groomer cleans what you can see. A vet treats what you can't.

At Amity, we believe that understanding *why* we recommend a treatment is just as important as the treatment itself. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, so you can make informed decisions for your pet.

Cleaning vs Treating Disease

Imagine visiting your dentist.

Would you be happy if they polished the front of your teeth without looking underneath your gums or taking X-rays?

Probably not.

Most dental disease occurs **below the gum line**, where it can't be seen. Plaque and bacteria build up around the tooth roots, causing infection, pain and bone loss. Simply removing the visible tartar leaves the underlying disease untreated.

Why an Anaesthetic?

To properly examine and treat your pet's mouth, they must remain completely still.

A general anaesthetic allows us to:

- Examine every tooth thoroughly.
- Probe beneath the gum line.
- Take dental X-rays when needed.
- Remove tartar above **and below** the gum line.
- Polish the teeth to slow future plaque build-up.
- Safely extract painful or diseased teeth if necessary.

Most importantly, it allows us to do all of this **without causing pain, fear or distress**.

What About Anaesthesia-Free Dental Cleaning?

Some groomers offer cosmetic teeth cleaning. While this may make the visible surfaces look whiter, it doesn't treat the disease hidden beneath the gums.

In some cases, it can even give a false sense of security. Teeth may appear clean while painful infection continues unnoticed below the surface.

For this reason, cosmetic cleaning should never be considered a replacement for a proper veterinary dental assessment.

Isn't an Anaesthetic Risky?

Every anaesthetic carries some degree of risk, but modern veterinary anaesthesia is remarkably safe.

Before recommending an anaesthetic, we assess your pet carefully. Depending on their age and health, we may recommend a pre-anaesthetic blood test to check for hidden problems and tailor the anaesthetic specifically to them. Throughout the procedure, your pet is closely monitored by a dedicated member of the team from start to finish.

For most pets, the risk of leaving painful dental disease untreated is significantly greater than the risk of the anaesthetic itself.

Because Pain Isn't Always Obvious

One of the most surprising things about pets is how well they hide pain.

Many continue eating, wagging their tails and behaving normally despite significant dental disease. That doesn't mean their mouth isn't sore—it simply means they're incredibly good at coping.

Our aim isn't just to make teeth look clean.

It's to remove pain, restore comfort and protect your pet's long-term health.

Because healthy teeth mean a healthier, happier pet.

And your pet deserves more than a brighter smile.

They deserve a comfortable life.

Because they're not just a pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.