



Our Beloved Pets Need Dental Care Too by Julie Anne Fidler



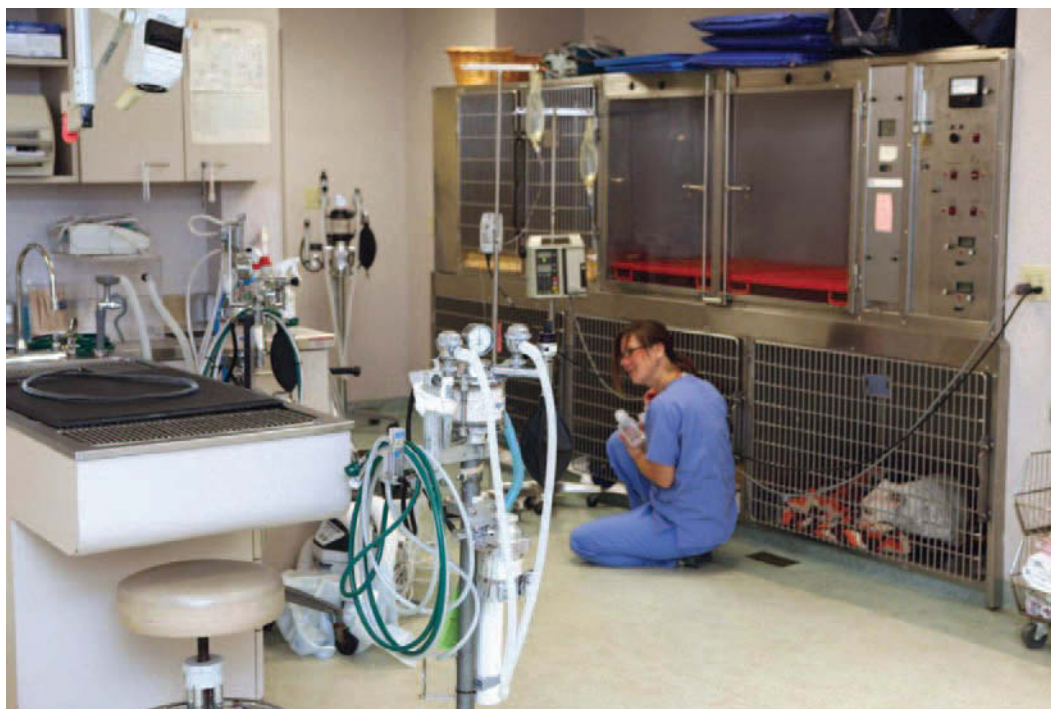
Hani Battah, DVM

ownership. Now, the staff is about to make it a little easier for pet owners to remember and proactively treat their pets' oral health.

Dr. Hani Battah has been with Smoketown since 2004. Battah's veterinary experience has literally spanned the globe, as he has practiced veterinary medicine not just in Lancaster County, but also in New Zealand and Iraq. He understands and has seen firsthand the impact that poor and insufficient dental care can have on a family pet and is working toward becoming board-certified in veterinary dentistry.

In fact, it won't be long until VCA becomes an animal hospital that offers specialized dental care with the help of Battah and, eventually, the rest of the medical staff at the hospital. VCA is currently in the process of renovating an area in the back of the building, which used to house a large animal surgery area, into a "pet dentist's office."

"Our dentistry caseload is increasing a lot, and we just don't have the space to accommodate them. The decision



was made to put more equipment and more tables back there so we could accommodate more dental patients, and do it more efficiently."

Battah says the field of animal dentistry has come a long way in the last 25 years, and as more people recognize the importance of keeping their pets' mouths clean, it comes as no surprise to him that the hospital's dental caseload is starting to swell. Hopefully, that means fewer animals will suffer the

pain of broken teeth and infections. Battah anticipates that he and VCA will be able to educate the public about the need for actual care, not just tooth extraction, and that can mean anything from a root canal to even braces.

"Pets do everything with their mouths that we do with our hands," says Battah. "So a pet without teeth is like a human without hands. This makes it important to preserve existing teeth rather than extracting them."

Battah and VCA are anxious to open their dentistry facility and help their patients lead longer lives, free of unnecessary pain and difficulty, which means pet owners will have more quality time to spend with their furry friends, too.

Dr. Battah claims that Smoketown Veterinary Hospital is one of the busiest and most progressive practices he knows. This is remarkable because he has been involved with veterinary medicine not only in the U.S., but in New Zealand and Iraq as well. He has been with Smoketown Veterinary Hospital since 2004.

Interested in becoming board-certified in veterinary dentistry, Dr. Battah likens a pet's teeth to a human's hands. "Pets do everything with their mouths that we do with our hands," he says. "So a pet without teeth is like a human without hands." This makes it important to preserve existing teeth rather than extract them.

When not at work, Dr. Battah enjoys time with his wife, daughter, and his cat named "Katie." Athletically, he plans on tackling two triathlons per year besides his involvement with soccer and weight training.

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