

Horses like people, can feel pain in their mouths, but as prey animals, they don't always make it obvious, so it can be very difficult to identify any issues without performing a dental examination, hence we recommend regular check-ups.



## Signs of dental issues:

- Your horse might drop bits of food.
- Quidding (Balling 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 have poorly digested food in their faeces.
- They may be packing food in their cheeks, giving them a hamster appearance.
- Your horse may throw their head around on the lunge or under saddle
- Your horse might struggle to eat carrots.



## Too young?

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 checked every 6 months. As an owner, it can be harder to spot dental issues in younger horses, especially if they are not old enough to be in work, as there will be less behavioural changes to look for.

We usually recommend your horse has a dental every 12 months however, some may require 6 monthly checks, i.e. young horse, those in competitive work, or if there are any dental issues identified.

## Why sedation?

In order to look at every surface of your horse's teeth a gag, mirror and 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.

Some horses will allow us to use an electric rasp without sedating, many will not, which may prevent us from doing the best job we can. By sedating the horse, we can also make the experience more pleasant for them. By reducing the stress of the situation, we can do a far better job with an electric rasp, rather than a hand rasp.



**Equine Dentist—Equine Dental Technician—Equine Vet—  
Who does dentistry?**

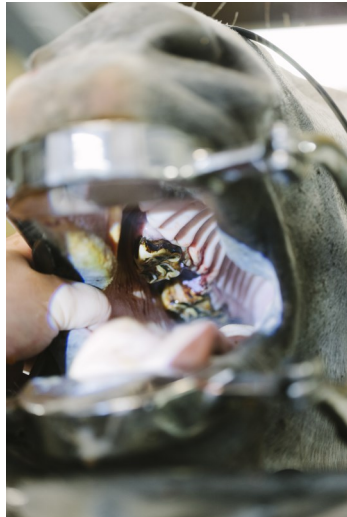
Anyone can refer to themselves as an equine dentist or, equine dental technician (EDT) without, any additional qualifications! If using an equine dentist, it is important to check whether they are qualified or not. An easy way to do this is to look at the British Association of Equine Dental Technicians, [www.baedt.com](http://www.baedt.com) and, the World Wide Association of Equine Dentistry at [wwaed.org.uk](http://wwaed.org.uk).

The main difference between using an equine dentists/EDT's, to using a vet is, that there are a lot of restriction on what the dentists can do, versus the vet.

An Equine dentists/EDT's, who are not UK CAT2 qualified, can only legally remove small dental overgrowths and sharp enamel points, with hand instruments. Those that are qualified, can legally do more, including using powered equipment, however, for large tooth extractions or similar procedures, your horse will need to be referred to a vet.

All equine vets can do dentistry and in order to sedate, a vet is required.

At Summerleaze all of our vets have modern dental equipment and carry out routine dental work . Horses often develop sharp points on the edges of their teeth called Sharp Enamel Points, which can rub against the side of their cheek and along their tongue. We can also find gaps between the teeth called diastemas, these can result in food-material pocketing in between the teeth and gums. We may also find extra or missing teeth, fractured and infected teeth, that require removing. Horses can also develop infundibular caries (cavities) in the surface of the teeth. Some of these things may require further investigations such as radiographs, or close examination with dental cameras.



**Stuart Altoft** is well know for equine dentistry and has additional qualifications in this field. In 2010 he achieved the BEVA/BVDA Equine Dental Technician examination.

And 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 Dentistry in the UK.

Much of his time is spent on more complex/unusual cases and referrals.



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Join Summerleaze Vets for our free client evening on

**Poor Performance**

18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 7pm for 7:30pm start

At Hitts Barton Equestrian, Whimble, Exeter EX5 2NY

We will be discussing a poor performance work up with a focus on backs and necks, respiratory diseases, and gastric ulceration.

Please bring your own chair.

Refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP to [summerleaze@summerleaze-vets.co.uk](mailto:summerleaze@summerleaze-vets.co.uk)

What3Words///playing.celebrate.outfitter



Wednesday 5th July	7PM for 7:30PM Start	<b>Laminitis</b>	Downclose Stables, Crewkerne, TA18 7SH	Run inconjunction with BHS Dorset.
Tuesday 18th July	7PM for 7:30PM Start	<b>Poor Performance</b>	Hitts Barton Equestrian, Whimble, Exeter EX5 2NY	Discussing a poor performance work up with a focus on backs and necks, respiratory diseases and gastric ulceration.
Wednesday 30th August	7PM for 7:30PM Start	<b>Geriatric Health Care</b>	Curland Equestrian, TA3 5SD	Covering common conditions affecting our older population and best management.