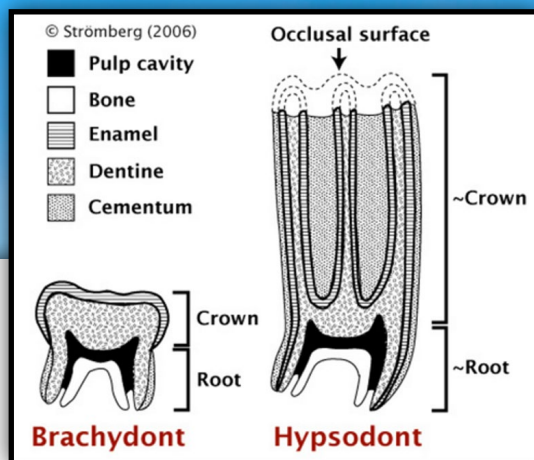




Wild horses don't get their teeth done...



It's one of the most common comments we hear when discussing equine dentistry.

While it's true that wild horses don't receive annual dental examinations, they also don't live the same lives as our domesticated horses. Wild horses spend up to 18 hours a day grazing coarse forage, which helps wear their teeth down to some extent. Even then, dental disease still occurs in wild horses – they simply don't have a vet to call when it becomes uncomfortable or a problem!

Unlike those of humans, dogs, or cats (which are brachydonts), a horse's teeth continuously erupt (grow) throughout much of its life (hypsodont). Equine teeth are specifically designed to withstand constant grinding of fibrous forage. They contain infoldings of hard enamel throughout the tooth, interspersed with softer dentine and cementum. This creates a rough grinding surface as the tooth wears. In contrast, humans, dogs, and cats have enamel only on the outer surface of their teeth, making their teeth better suited for biting and tearing rather than prolonged grinding.

Our horses are often living longer, eating softer feeds, and are expected to perform under saddle.

As a result, abnormal wear patterns can develop over time.

The tricky part? Many horses show no obvious signs of dental disease until the problem is quite advanced.

Some of the issues we commonly find during routine dental examinations include:

- Sharp enamel points causing cheek and tongue ulcers
- Retained caps in young horses
- Wave mouth and abnormal wear patterns
- Periodontal (gum) disease
- Tooth root infections
- Fractured teeth

Left untreated, dental disease can contribute to:

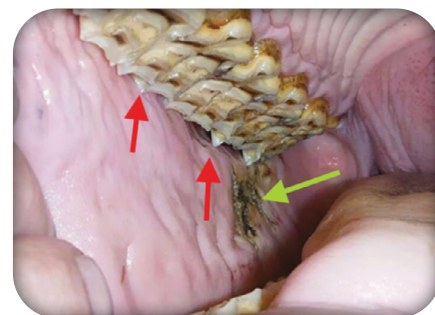
- Weight loss
- Quidding (dropping partially chewed feed)
- Choke
- Colic
- Bad breath
- Head shaking
- Nasal discharge from tooth root infections
- Resistance under saddle or poor performance

As a general rule, most adult horses benefit from an annual dental examination, while younger and older horses often require checks every 6–12 months.

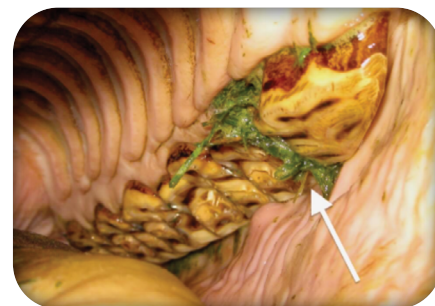
Regular dental examinations aren't just about "floating teeth" –

they're an opportunity to identify problems early, improve comfort, and help your horse get the most out of their feed and work.

If your horse hasn't had a dental examination in the last 12 months, now might be the perfect time to book one.



Sharp enamel points (red arrows) are a common finding in almost all routine dentals. Left untreated, these can cause ulceration (green arrow) of the lining of the cheek or tongue.



Diastemas (white arrow) are a very painful (and common) condition in which food is forcefully packed into the gum between two teeth. The food material begins to rot, causing significant infection and inflammation of the gum.