

References

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<https://www.haleveterinaryclinic.ca/site/educational-material-veterinary-guelph/2024/07/31/ball-therapy>

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Dr. Andrea Wernham Veterinary Dental Practitioner

The Veterinary Dental Practitioner (VDP) program was established by Dr. Brett Beckman, a board-certified Veterinary Dentist, to provide training for General Practice veterinarians that want to provide a high level of dentistry for their patients. They are well-qualified veterinarians in General Practice to provide safe and proper oral care to your loved ones. However, they are not board-certified specialists.



BASE NARROW CANINES

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What Does Base Narrow Canines Mean?

“Base Narrow” is the term used when the mandibular canines are situated too close together, resulting in traumatic contact with the soft tissue or teeth of the upper jaw. This misalignment can cause significant discomfort and trauma.



Base narrow canine teeth result in trauma to the hard palate.



You can see the trauma caused by the lower canine teeth here

What Happens After Diagnosis?

Management of base narrow canine teeth will depend on the age of the dog.

If diagnosed when a puppy is 12 weeks of age or younger, extraction of the deciduous (baby) canine teeth is recommended if the teeth are touching tissues in the mouth. The reason for this is to eliminate the pain being caused by the teeth contacting the roof of the mouth each time the puppy chews, and to encourage the adult teeth to erupt in a more appropriate position, without the deciduous teeth in the way.

If diagnosed when a dog's permanent teeth are erupting (around 5-6 months of age), we must remove the deciduous teeth as soon as possible if they are not actively loose. The adult teeth will come in on the inside of the baby teeth, causing an even worse malocclusion.

If diagnosed in adulthood, treatment options may include orthodontics, shortening the teeth to reduce the contact with the tissues or extraction of the lower canine teeth.

For all ages, we often must extract the mandibular incisor teeth as well.

Other Treatment Options

Other treatments may include crown extensions, incline plane, crown reduction with pulp cap.

What is Ball Therapy?

Ball Therapy is a non-referral intervention for young dogs whose adult lower canines are erupting in a base-narrow position.

The premise is that by encouraging the dog to hold a firm object in their mouth for a significant period of time each day, we can apply pressure to the teeth as they erupt and encourage more natural placement of the teeth.

(In essence, this is a removable orthodontic appliance)

It is recommended that ball therapy start 7-14 days after extraction of the deciduous (baby) teeth, even before the adult teeth start to erupt. Training dogs to play with and hold the ball is a vital part of the training.

You need to size the ball appropriately so that it fits between the canine teeth and it should not be a tennis ball, which will damage enamel over time due to the abrasive texture.

