

Many pet owners may not recognize that their pet's occlusion could be a painful problem.

**Class 0:** Is a normal occlusion where the maxilla is slightly longer and wider than the mandible. This creates a perfect "scissor bite." A normal occlusion is considered atraumatic and does not require any treatment.



**Class I (Neuroclusion):** Is where the jaw length is normal, but one or more teeth are out of correct alignment. These conditions may be known as: base narrow (linguoversion) canines, lance (mesioversion) canines, rostral crossbite, caudal crossbite and asymmetry (older term: wry bite). Base narrow canines have the potential to cause significant trauma, which may result in the development of an oronasal fistula (connection between the oral and nasal cavities). The first treatment of choice for base narrow canines typically includes the placement of an incline plane, which slowly moves the teeth to an atraumatic position. Another treatment option includes coronal amputation with vital pulp therapy. Lance canines (mesioversion) are another condition which typically affects Shetland Sheepdogs. Rostral and caudal crossbites most commonly affect sight hounds and collies (incisor/premolar/molar is displaced). Orthodontic treatment for these conditions is also available.



**Class II (Mandibular Distocclusion):** Is a condition where the mandible is shorter than the maxilla. Older terms include: brachygnathism, overshot or "parrot mouth". This may also be a painful condition. The mandibular incisors and canines usually contact the palate and cause significant trauma. Treatment options include: coronal amputation with vital pulp therapy. Extraction may also be a part of the treatment plan for a "pain free" bite.



**Class III (Mandibular Mesiocclusion):** Brachycephalic dogs and cats are placed in this category (Boxers, Pugs, Persians, British Shorthairs). Older terms include: prognathism, undershot, or "bulldog" bite. For certain breeds it may be an acceptable standard, but it can increase the prevalence of periodontal disease and could be painful. For your pet's health, annual oral evaluations are a must. Painful occlusions may be treated by coronal amputation of the maxillary canines with vital pulp therapy. Mild cases may respond to orthodontic treatment. Extraction could also be part of a treatment plan to provide a comfortable occlusion.



Correction of a malocclusion is considered only when the occlusion is traumatic or painful. The American Veterinary Medical Association states: the correction of conformation defect in a dog or cat is unethical except when the abnormality affects the health and/or welfare of the animal. The American Veterinary Dental College's position is that the goal of an orthodontic procedure is to provide pets with a healthy and functional occlusion. Genetic counseling is an option for owners that are concerned about the cosmetics of an occlusion or advice on future sires and bitches for breeding.