

Glossary of Equine Dentistry Terms

Cheek teeth – The molars and premolars located toward the back of the horse's jaws.

Dentin – A relatively soft component of the tooth. In horses, a layer of dentin covers the hard enamel when the tooth erupts. Dentin stains easily, which is why horse teeth often appear yellow or brown.

Enamel points – Sharp edges that form on the sides of a horse's teeth due to uneven wear. If not addressed, these points can cause ulcerations and pain.

Floating (also *Equilibrating*) – Removing sharp edges from the teeth and ensuring they are balanced with correct contact on top and bottom to ensure even wear.

Halitosis – Bad breath, which can be an indicator of an infection or other problem in the horse's mouth.

Hooks – Points that occur at the front or back of the tooth when the horse's molars do not match up and grind unevenly.

Hypsodont teeth – Teeth that continue to erupt through the animal's life. In horses, teeth erupt at a rate of two to four millimeters each year.

Mandible – The lower jaw, which in horses is narrower than the maxilla (upper jaw.)

Maxilla – The upper jaw, which in horses is wider than the mandible (lower jaw.)

Parrot mouth – A common conformation fault in which the upper jaw juts forward over the lower jaw.

Quidding – Dropping feed, often in partially chewed balls of hay or grass. This indicates that the horse is having trouble chewing and needs dental attention.

Ramps – Often caused by a parrot mouth conformation, this is a wear pattern of the cheek teeth where they slope upwards.

Speculum – A metal brace that holds the horse's mouth open during a dental exam.

Wave mouth – A wear pattern of the teeth characterized by waves of high and low places along the horse's cheek teeth.

Wolf teeth – Small teeth located just in front of the horse's premolars. These teeth are typically removed when a horse is young because they may cause discomfort and interfere with the bit later in life.