

How to brush your pets Teeth

Dental Disease is the most common problem seen in our pet population today. More than 85% of all dogs and cats presented to veterinarians are affected by dental problems. Periodontal disease is what causes bad breath as well as eventual tooth loss.

We recommend daily dental care at home for your pets just like the rest of the family. It is best to begin home care at an early age (8 to 12 weeks) during the puppy or kittenhood, but it is never too late to begin.

Supplies Needed

Washcloth or toothbrush

Pet toothpaste (see products available in our hospital)

Procedure

Week 1 - Slowly Acquainting your pet with mouth care

Using your hand, gently open pet's mouth and run your fingers around his or her lips, lifting the lips, etc. This should be done for just 30 seconds the first day, progressing to a couple minutes by the end of the week. Reward your pet with a small treat at the end of each session (no "people food").

Week 2 - Introducing the Toothbrush or Washcloth

This week use either a wet washcloth wrapped around your index finger or a wet toothbrush on the teeth. Lift the lips. Massage the outer surfaces only of the upper and lower teeth, using a back and forth motion. Do this for 30 seconds on day, progressing up to 3 minutes by the end of the week.

Week 3 - Add Toothpaste and Extend brushing Time

This week use your dental cleaning instrument and now add 3/4 inch of toothpaste to brush the outer surfaces only, of the upper and lower teeth, using a back and forth motion.

A Few Pointers

- Do not rush the process or else the pet may become resistant.
- Always give a treat at the end of each session making it enjoyable. Praise highly!!
- If your pet shows any indication of aggression (growling, bearing it's teeth, biting, scratching, etc..) stop immediately!
- NEVER use a human toothpaste. Vomiting is common if this is done.
- Cleaning at home will reduce the frequency of professional care needed.
- Regular brushing is the best way of controlling dental plaque and tartar. Using dental rinses, hard food, treats, and toys are helpful but not as effective.