

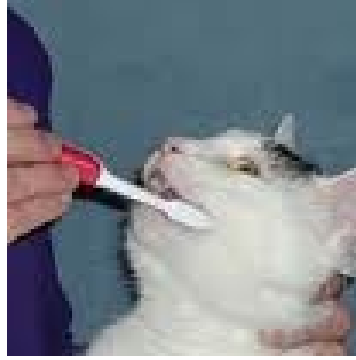


How to Clean Your Pet's Teeth

- ❖ Have a veterinarian check your pet's teeth prior to commencing a tooth-brushing routine. If your pet has gum disease or damaged teeth, the process will be painful and they will associate pain with tooth brushing. You may even get bitten!
- ❖ Purchase a pet dental kit containing toothpaste and a tooth brush. Most toothpastes' are flavoured using poultry, beef or mint to increase palatability. Unlike human toothpaste, it contains no fluoride, doesn't "froth" and is designed to be swallowed as dogs and cats do not have the ability to spit. When choosing a paste, ensure that it is an enzymatic one as this will increase the effectiveness of the paste and help to break down plaque. There are a number of different brush sizes for different species and sizes. There are also finger brushes available which are often used as a way of getting the pet used to having a foreign object placed in their mouths.
- ❖ Try and get your pet used to having it's mouth looked at. After each time, reward them with a treat, pats and plenty of praise. The main thing is not to force the pet which can cause resentment and fear as well as placing you in danger of being bitten, albeit unintentionally on the part of the pet.
- ❖ It is the mechanical effect of brushing that is of most benefit, but how much you can actually manage it is usually dictated by the length of time your pet will happily tolerate it.
 - Step 1 – Gently pet and stroke the muzzle, slowly lifting the upper lip for about 30 seconds. Allow your pet to sniff and lick a small amount of toothpaste from the end of your finger.



- Reward with praise and a treat (Greenies and Pegetables are a good choice) at the end of the session.
 - Step 2 – Repeat as above and also gently run your finger with a small amount of toothpaste over the pet's teeth for 30-45 seconds. Reward with praise and a treat.
 - Step 3 – Repeat step 2, adding 15 seconds time to running your finger over your pet's teeth. Remember to always reward with a treat.
 - Step 4 – If all is going well, run your finger over the teeth for 30 seconds and then gently insert the tooth brush and again run over the teeth for 30 seconds.
 - Step 5 – Repeat as step 4 and increase the time by 30 seconds.
 - Step 6 – Repeat as step 5 and gently scrub your pet's teeth.
 - Step 7 – If you feel that your pet is accepting brushing, increase the brushing time until you are able to spend at least one minute on each side of the mouth.
- ❖ With cats, it is often easier to lift them onto a table, or do it while they are sitting on your knee and are quite relaxed. Lifting the head back slightly and positioning your hand (the one you are not using to brush) around the muzzle, prevents them from opening their mouths. Lifting the lip reveals the teeth which are known as a scissor bite. This interlocking formation means that it is possible to brush the lower and upper teeth with the same brush stroke. The larger teeth



at the back of the mouth will not be easily viewable, so the tooth brush must be slotted in between the cheek and teeth and pushed as far back as possible. Cats can be wrapped in a towel to restrain them if necessary.

- ❖ For practical reasons it may not be possible to brush your pet's teeth. A number of products are available to help with maintaining oral hygiene for these situations. While these products are extremely useful, nothing is as effective as daily brushing to delay the onset of periodontal disease. They include:
 - Diet – Hill's Prescription Diet T/d dry. This diet allows the tooth to enter the biscuit without shattering it, unlike traditional dry pet foods that shatter immediately. As the tooth leaves the biscuit, the tooth surface is cleaned then it is crunched and can be digested. The diet is designed so that each kibble will allow the tooth to penetrate deeper before it shatters, so deposits of plaque and debris are wiped from the tooth surface, helping to prevent problems such as halitosis and dental disease.
 - Aquadent – Aquadent helps to improve bad breath when used daily. It helps to maintain healthy gums after dental surgery/scaling and polishing, which increases the length of time between dental treatments and cleaning.
 - Greenies – Greenies helps removes plaque and tartar – even heavy deposits, reduces gingivitis, freshens breath and improves your dog's overall oral health by helping to deter dental disease. They are designed to be given as a treat once daily. They contain no artificial colours, flavours and preservatives and are low in calories.