

Brushing your pet's teeth

Why brush your pet's teeth

Daily brushing has been scientifically proven to be the most effective way to prevent periodontal disease in dogs and cats.

What to use

You will find a finger toothbrush the easiest to use for cats and small to medium sized dogs. A child's or special pet toothbrush may be suitable for larger dogs. Antibacterial gel (eg. Maxiguard gel) or pet toothpaste (eg. Petosan chicken-flavoured toothpaste) is tolerated well by most animals and helps prevent the build up of tartar-forming plaque.

Method

Start by getting your pet used to having your finger in its mouth. **DO NOT DO THIS IF YOUR PET IS LIKELY TO BITE YOU.** Carefully lift his lip to expose his teeth. Use treats afterwards to reward your pet for tolerating your finger gently massaging his gums. (Don't get treats confused with fingers!)



Apply a small amount of gel or paste to your finger and let your pet taste it. Use your finger to apply gel/paste to teeth and gums. Praise and reward your pet for tolerating this. You may need to repeat this stage for several sessions until your pet is comfortable.

Progress to using the finger brush, gradually increasing the number of teeth cleaned per session until you can do them all. Start with the easily accessible canine teeth and work towards front and back.



If possible progress to using a bristle brush with a small amount of toothpaste on it. Place the brush at a 45° angle to the gum line and move the brush gently in circular and back and forth patterns over the pet's teeth. Try and brush your pet's teeth daily or at least twice weekly. Even if you only manage to apply some gel or paste to the teeth it's better than nothing. The products contain antibacterial agents and enzymatic cleaning agents (in the paste) that help to prevent plaque forming. On the days when you

don't clean your pet's teeth, offer them something healthy to chew on such as Greenies, pig's ears, rawhide chews etc. Some of the commercial dog foods such as Hill science diet T/D or oral care have been scientifically proven to help keep dogs' and cats' teeth clean by abrasive action as they chew.