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The Standard of  
Veterinary Excellence

*“Where Smart Pets Bring Their People”*

## How To Brush Your Pet's Teeth



Over 80% of adult dogs and cats suffer from periodontal disease. This can be prevented with daily dental care. Daily care is vital to proper oral health care.

At our clinics, we encourage all of our clients to brush their pet's teeth. However, we understand and appreciate that some pets, despite their owner's best efforts, will resist this procedure. This could happen to you. There are simple, daily home care alternatives to teeth brushing. If you experience that you are unable to brush your pet's teeth, please let us know. Still, we encourage all pet owners to at least try to brush their pet's teeth, the training of which is outlined below.

### ***Can I Really Brush My Pet's Teeth?***

Yes you can!! This is a relatively new idea for many pet owners, but not only can it be done, many times it is fun to do. Once a daily routine is established your pet will eagerly anticipate his/her extra time with you.

### ***How To Brush Your Pet's Teeth:***

**Select a toothpaste that is designed for pets** - The best pet toothpastes contain dual enzymes (not just one enzyme) that help control plaque. Try to avoid toothpastes with baking soda, detergents, or salt sometimes found in human pastes. Human toothpaste is too foamy, too detergent-like, and has too high a level of fluoride. The detergent action can cause stomach upset. The high fluoride level can even be toxic to pets. Human toothpastes are not designed to be swallowed. It is a reality that dogs and cats will swallow a paste put into their mouth. Just try to teach your dog or cat to spit!



**Choose a time** during the day (like in the evening when you brush your own teeth) to do the training. Eventually the teeth brushing should become part of your pet's daily routine. Pets like routine and familiarity. If brushing your pet's teeth can eventually become a routine, something that your pet will look forward to, he or she may make you feel guilty for NOT brushing their teeth. Our goal is to get your pet to come running to you when they know it's time for their dental “treat”. Find a time when your pet naturally seeks you out. Many cats have daily routines. Part of their routine will be to seek you out for attention. That is a good time to start the teeth brushing training.

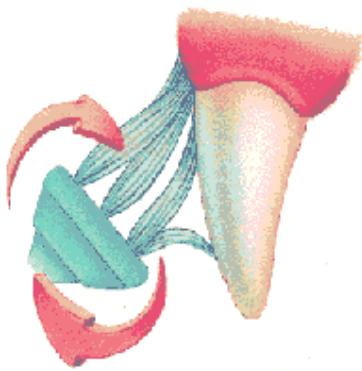
**Even cats can be trained to have their teeth brushed if the procedure is made worthwhile and is routine. Pets love routines!**

**Day 1:** The first day all you need to do is get your dog or cat to taste the toothpaste. Use an excited voice and “pump them up” for their tooth brushing experience. It should be a FUN experience! Have a small amount of toothpaste on your finger tip and during the excitement, “accidentally” lightly bump their nose with it. They will then lick what they smell there. Remember to stay excited!! 99% of them like the taste once they have experienced it. After they lick the toothpaste, PRAISE them. A small food treat afterwards could be helpful. Remember, it needs to be a positive experience.

**Day 2:** The next day start to rub the incisors with your finger coated with toothpaste for only about three seconds. Again, be excited and give them lots of praise. We want to make this a positive experience. A small food treat afterwards could be helpful.

**Each day thereafter,** extend the time spent in the mouth and massage more of the teeth and gums. Don't forget to get them excited for their dental care and reward them afterward with verbal and physical praise and maybe a food treat. Your pet can be fully trained in two to four weeks.

Once they feel comfortable with your finger in their mouth, you can graduate to the finger brush. For cats, (which have tight lips) you may only be able to rub the incisors and canine teeth with your finger or a finger brush.



Finally maybe they can graduate from the finger brush to the dog or cat toothbrushes. Pets should try to step up to a regular toothbrush as it has a larger abrasive surface and more effectively removes the invisible plaque.

For cats and their tight lips, try finding a cat specific toothbrush. Such a cat toothbrush has a smaller head and narrow neck to the brush.

Try to angle the toothbrush bristles towards the gumline, moving in a circular motion. Your goal is to remove the invisible plaque at the gumline. Again, after each session, reward, reward, reward!

*\*\*\*Helpful Hint: Rather than placing the paste on top of the brush try to place it between the bristles. This allows the paste to spend the more time in contact with the teeth surface.*

### **Did You Know.....**

.....that tooth brushing can extend the life of a new puppy or kitten by 2 to 6 years?

.....dogs and cats accumulate calculus 5 times faster than humans – imagine going 5 days without brushing your teeth! That is what is happening inside your pet's mouth on a daily basis!

.....Many people think they don't need to brush their pet's teeth because they have regular teeth cleanings done on their pets – imagine going to your own dentist and having your teeth cleaned – then not brushing for the next 6 months – because you'll just get them cleaned again! Plaque begins to accumulate within hours after a professional teeth cleaning. That is why daily care is so important to good oral health.



**Heavy Calculus Buildup On A Molar  
This Pet Has Stage 4 Periodontal**

Always use toothpaste and a toothbrush designed for pets. We recommend a dual enzymatic (rather than a single enzymatic) toothpaste called C.E.T. toothpaste which comes in poultry, malt, and fish flavors.

### **Want to be Pet Dentistry Smart?**

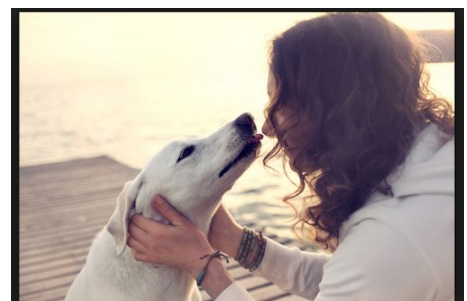
Here are some web sites with fantastic information about pet dental care, visit:

American College of Veterinary Dentists

<https://www.avdc.org/>

American College of Veterinary Dentists

– Frequently Asked Questions about “Anesthesia Free Dentals”.



<http://avdc.org/AFD/>

American Animal Hospitals Association (AAHA) page: "10 facts you need to know to protect your pet's oral (and overall!) health"

<https://www.aaha.org/your-pet/pet-owner-education/aaha-guidelines-for-pet-owners/dental-care/>

How to Brush A Dog's Teeth

<https://dogtime.com/dog-health/dog-dental-care/4984-dog-brush-teeth-faq-white>