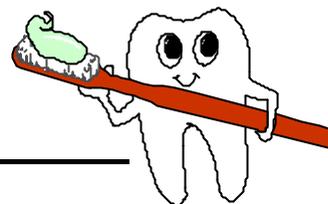


How to Brush Your Pet's Teeth



Good dental care is essential to extend your pet's life span and assure a good quality of life. Just like you, your pet needs to receive daily dental care at home. It is best to begin home care when the puppy or kitten is between eight and twelve weeks; however, it is never too late to start. If your pet has any accumulated tartar (calculus) it must be removed by your veterinary surgeon. This process, called a prophylaxis (or scale and polish), will allow you to start your home care with teeth that are free from plaque and tartar and will make your efforts easier and more effective.

The daily brushing procedure should be pleasant for both you and your pet. Many pets enjoy the added attention while many owners look forward to close quality time spent with their companion animal.

The supplies you need are a toothbrush, preferably one designed for pets, and a pet toothpaste. Most animals accept brushing very well if they are introduced to the procedure in a calm and patient way. The best way is as follows:

- DAY 1:** *Gently pet and scratch the muzzle, slowly lifting the lip for about 30 seconds. Reward with praise and a treat at the end of the session.*
- DAY 2:** *Repeat as above and also gently run your finger or finger toothbrush and a small amount of animal tooth-paste over the pet's teeth for 30 to 45 seconds. Reward with a treat and praise.*
- DAY 3:** *Repeat day 2, adding 15 seconds time to running your finger or finger toothbrush over the pet's teeth. Always reward with praise and a treat.*

DAY 4: *If all is going well, run your finger over the teeth for 30 seconds and then gently insert the toothbrush and again run over the teeth for 30 seconds.*

DAY 5: *Repeat as day 4 and increase the time by 30 seconds.*

DAY 6: *Repeat as day 5 and gently rub your pet's teeth.*

DAY 7: *You know your pet best of all. If you feel that it is accepting the brushing well, gradually increase the brushing time until you are able to spend at least one minute on each side of the mouth.*

At any time that the animal is resisting, stop and wait until the next day. If your pet is still not accepting your efforts, contact your veterinary surgery for more advice.

Helpful Hints ...

Be patient. Take time with the process or else your pet will become resistant.

Give lots of praise. It's a new experience for you and your pet and praising your pet will make it more receptive.

Remember to always put a small amount of animal toothpaste on your finger or toothbrush. Your pet will like the taste and will associate the good taste, treats and praise with tooth brushing.

Reward your pet with treats at the end of each session. Remember, always make it fun!

Stop immediately if there is any sign of aggression. Call your veterinary surgery for further professional advice.

Human toothpaste is for humans, not for pets. It is common for human toothpaste to cause stomach problems and even vomiting.

Remember, always make it fun!