

Dental Homecare

Whether your pet has recently had a dental or you're just looking for information on how to help keep your pet's teeth clean, the following advice will be helpful.

Dental homecare always works best on a clean set of teeth. If tartar and sore gums are already present, it will be far less effective and may even be painful, especially when brushing. So if you have already had the dental work done, you now have a clean slate and are ready to get started! If not, then it's worth coming in for a free dental check to see if professional cleaning is the best first step for your pet.

Brushing

As with humans, there is no doubt that brushing is the most effective way to stop the build up of plaque that leads to tartar (calculus) and therefore gum disease... which can ultimately lead to tooth loss.

Most dogs, and some cats, will accept brushing if introduced gradually and gently. Getting them used to having their mouth handled when they are young gives you a definite head start.

As with most things in life, the more you practice, the better you'll get. Look upon it as a three stage project;

Step 1:

- When your pet is relaxed, get them used to having their lips, gums and teeth gently touched. A few seconds to start with is all that's needed.
- Give them a fuss or a treat when you've finished to ensure they have a positive association with the process.
- Show your pet their toothbrush and give them a treat, do this several times, regularly.

Step 2:

- Get some pet toothpaste (usually beef or poultry flavoured - pets cannot have fluoride so don't use human toothpaste). Start with a small amount on the end of your finger and rub it onto the gums or teeth, just to get them used to the flavour, which they usually like. Increase the amount of teeth you rub the paste onto as they get more used to the process.
- Allow your pet to sniff their toothbrush and use it to gently brush their face and nose to get them used to it being near their face. Remember to always give a treat after each session.

Step 3:

- Apply toothpaste to the brush and on the first day, aim to just brush one tooth! You only need to brush the outer surfaces of the tooth and concentrate on where the gum meets the tooth.
- As the days go on, aim to brush more and more of the teeth until you can manage the whole mouth. Always finish with a treat.

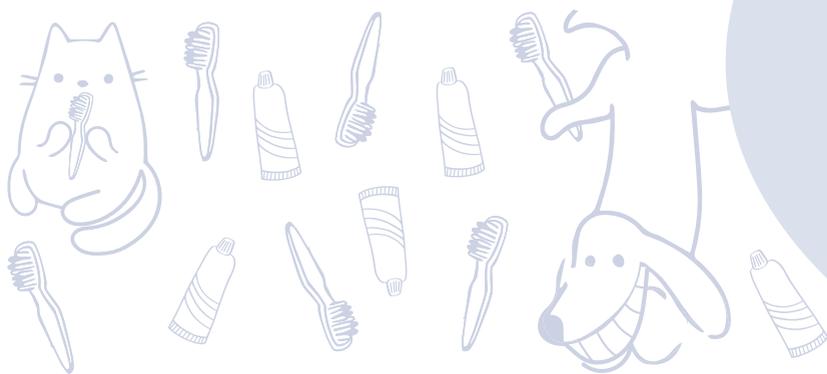
Daily brushing is great, even if you can only do this every other day, it's still good. If it's less frequent than this then the evidence is that unfortunately, it's not that helpful. Once incorporated into a daily routine, as with our teeth, it only takes a couple of minutes and there are plenty of pets out there who love the extra attention so much that they actively remind their owner it's tooth brushing time.

We stock specially designed toothbrushes and toothpastes for dogs and cats as well as starter packs that include both a toothbrush and tube of paste, along with a handy "How to Guide" to help you get started.

Specialist Dental Foods

Hills t/d is a special complete dried food approved by the VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) which is available for cats and dogs. The kibble (biscuit) has been specially formulated and designed to clean the teeth as they chew. There is excellent clinical evidence to show that when fed exclusively it markedly reduces plaque and tartar build up.

It is slightly more expensive than regular food but if it reduces the frequency/requirement for a descale and polish under anaesthetic, as well as improving oral hygiene, it can be money well spent. Plus Hills offer a money back guarantee, so if your pet doesn't like the food, you can return it for a full refund.



Chews

To enhance the effects of tooth brushing you may want to also offer your pets some dental chews. We recommend Veggiedent chews which are VOHC approved; they help to clean and freshen breath and when used regularly, alongside brushing, can reduce the frequency of a descale and polish under anesthetic.

Numerous other 'hard' chews are available. Items such as bones and 'antlers' should not be given. They are hard enough that they have the ability to fracture teeth as the dog applies chewing force onto them. The best rule of thumb is to avoid anything you can't put a dent into with your fingernail.

Mouth Rinse

Hexarinse

Just like us using mouth wash, there are mouth rinses available for our pets too. Hexarinse contains chlorhexidine which helps combat the bacteria in your pets mouth, promoting healthy gums.

Don't worry, we don't expect you to get your pet to use these rinses in the same way we do. We recommend squirting the rinse onto a microfibre finger brush and gently wiping over your pets teeth and gums after each meal.

Aquadent

This is a product that can be added to your pets drinking water. It helps eliminate bad breath and aids in the reduction of plaque build up.

If you opted to have our Sanos treatment applied to your pets teeth at the time of their dental treatment, we recommend a second application six months later. This is often done in a consult, however sometimes a sedation may be required – your vet or nurse will discuss this further with you.

Dental Clinics

All our branches offer dental clinics where we will carry out an oral examination on your pet and offer help and advice on your pets daily dental care regime.

If you have any questions or queries regarding your pets oral healthcare, speak to one of our team today.

