

Pawsitive Press

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[How to teach your dog or cat to accept daily tooth brushing](#)

[AVMA Animal Tracks podcast](#)

[Periodontal Disease](#)

Pets, like people, need dental care too!

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Daily removal of plaque is the key to any preventative oral health program. Unless your pet's teeth are brushed daily, plaque, which is an accumulation of bacteria, will build up at the gum line. Plaque may only appear as a yellow material along the gingival line. Plaque, alone, can cause gingivitis and inflammation in your pet's mouth. Eventually the material hardens and accumulates creating calculus—the already irritated the gums are then invaded by anaerobic bacteria. As the infection progresses, it causes loosening and destruction of the attachment of the tooth. In addition to loose and abscessed teeth, the infection under the gum line can spread to the nasal passages, the liver, kidneys, and even the heart.

How do I know that my pet needs to have their teeth cleaned?

Your veterinarian can best advise you as to the time and particular needs of a proper teeth cleaning. During recommended

annual health exams of your dog and cat evaluation your pets' mouth is done, along with their overall health. Not only are the teeth extremely important for oral health, but the other soft tissues of the mouth can become a health concern. Oral cancers of the mouth can be detected early in their disease process during a professional dental cleaning and exam. Having annual blood work to evaluate the health of these systems can help provide us, and you, with the best information to ensure your pet a long and healthy life.

How often does my pet need to have teeth cleaned by the veterinarian?

This can be very different for individual dogs and cats. It depends on the degree of gingivitis, and/or plaque and tartar accumulation. As an owner you should try to examine your pet's teeth monthly. Look for an accumulation of yellow or brown material along the gum line, especially over the cheek teeth and canines. The front teeth, or incisors, can

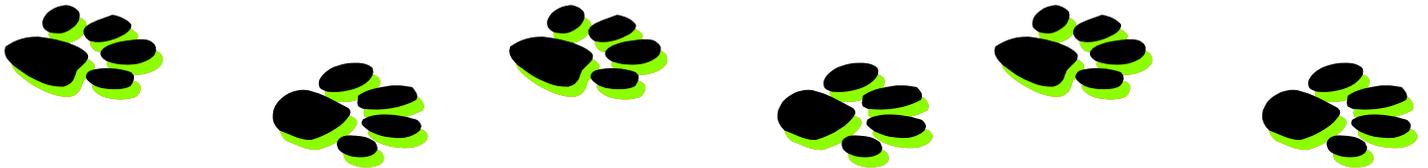
become mobile and wiggle, over the lifetime of your pet. If these teeth are moving, your pet should be examined to prevent them from breaking or becoming abscessed. Once you notice plaque or tartar accumulation, it is time for a professional cleaning with your family veterinarian.

The intervals between teeth cleaning procedures will depend on how often you can brush your pet's teeth. Once or twice daily cleaning is optimum. If you cannot brush the teeth, then your pet could possibly need two or three teeth cleaning visits yearly.



Before

After



4 Stages of Periodontal Disease

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Early Gingivitis	Advanced Gingivitis	Early Periodontitis	Advanced Periodontitis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inflammation at the gumline• Redness• Plaque accumulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stage 1 conditions plus...• Bleeding on probing• Tartar - Mineralization of plaque• Bad breath - Volatile Sulphur Compounds (V.S.C.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stage 2 conditions plus...• Pustular discharge• Slight to moderate bone loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stage 3 conditions plus...• Deep pockets of infection• Severe bone loss• Mobility

Dental Home Care for Pets

Home oral hygiene can make a tremendous difference in your pet's comfort and health. There are several home care oral hygiene options from which to choose, but keep in mind that anything you can do to help prevent plaque and tartar accumulation will pay big dividends. What really matters is whether or not home oral hygiene will be provided over the long haul – considerable effort applied only for a short period or only occasionally will be of no long-term benefit.

BRUSHING and TOOTH-PASTES: Brushing your pet's teeth is the single most effective means to maintain oral health between professional dental examinations. This makes sense because the bacterial film known as "plaque" is the cause of periodontal disease. This film is easily disrupted by the simple mechanical effect of brushing the teeth. Frequent (ideally daily) brushing is recommended to maintain optimal dental health. Almost all pets will eventually accept brushing. The key to success is to be patient and gradual in your approach, brushing mainly the outsides of the "cheek teeth" located under the upper lip. A pet that resists brushing frequently may have painful areas in the mouth that need to be addressed.

A variety of products safe for pets are available in the marketplace. If you use a brush and a dentifrice, AVDC (American Veterinary Dental College) recommends pet-specific toothpastes. These come in flavors that pets accept, such as poultry and seafood. **Avoid** human toothpastes as they often contain abrasives and high-foaming detergents that should not be swallowed or inhaled by dogs.

Toothbrushes designed for pets are soft and angled to assist in brushing the back teeth. Some pets prefer finger brushes. A variety of "dental wipes" containing different products are available. The single-use wipes are rubbed daily on the outside of the teeth to remove plaque.

DIETS and CHEWS: Several "dental diets" have been shown to be of benefit in decreasing dental disease. Some employ a specific kibble design and others include a chemical anti-tartar poly-phosphate ingredient.

Rawhide products and chew treats can be helpful if chewed daily, and some rawhide chews and biscuits contain an anti-tartar ingredient. Palatability is important – chewing every day is the ideal.

Chew toys are only of benefit if they are played with frequently and over the long haul – you can increase the pet's willingness to chew by smearing palatable peanut butter or soft cheese on the product.

Pets should be monitored while chewing a chew treat or toy, as they may swallow large pieces, leading to a variety of digestive system disorders.



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-\$47.29

Free Dental Exam

(call for an appointment today 727-733-9351)

Schedule an appointment for your pet's complimentary dental exam with the doctor of your choice. Let us provide a treatment and wellness plan for your pet's dental health. Good dental hygiene provides not only whiter teeth and fresh breath but also helps prevent kidney and heart disease.
Expires 2/28/14

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-10%

10% Off Dental Cleaning

(Call for an appointment today 727-733-9351)

Discount applies to anesthesia, prophylaxis, and any other dental radiographs or extractions that might be needed. Offer excludes required pre-dental labwork. May not be combined with any other coupons or discounts.
Expires 2/28/14

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- *Heartworm Prevention
- *Flea and Tick Control
- *Food
- *Prescription Medication
- *Dietary Supplements

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