

October 2022

Brushing Your Pet's Teeth

Periodontal disease, or infection of the teeth, gums, and surrounding bone, is one of the most common diseases seen in pets. Keep reading to see what you can do to prevent periodontal disease in your pet!

Tooth Brushing

Brushing your pets' teeth is one of the best ways to reduce dental disease! Getting your pet used to toothbrushing can be a process that takes several weeks, so make sure to go slow in order to not overly stress your pet! Start by using a Q-tip or gauze to rub the outside of your pets' teeth. You can put a small amount of a favored food item like peanut butter for dogs or tuna water for cats on the Q-tip or gauze to make it a more favorable experience for your pet. When first starting to brush their teeth, focus mainly on the canine teeth and the larger teeth in the back of the mouth, as these are the teeth that tend to attract the most tartar. As your pet becomes more comfortable with the experience, you can slowly increase your focus so that all of the teeth are being treated! Ideally, you should spend around 1 minute per day cleaning your pets' teeth (around 30 seconds per side).

For small dogs and cats, who have much more fragile gums and smaller teeth, brushing the teeth with gauze or a Q-tip is an acceptable way to brush the teeth. For larger dogs, this may not be enough to fully get rid of the tartar. Switching to a baby toothbrush or a toothbrush with very fine bristles is ideal to make sure that the entire tooth surface is being brushed. Finger toothbrushes also exist, and may make it easier to brush the entire tooth more effectively. These toothbrushes are also fine to be used for cats and smaller dogs as well.



Toothbrushing Alternatives

Some pets just won't allow you to brush their teeth. There are other products that exist that help remove plaque, tartar, or both from your pets' teeth. Dental diets (such as Hill's T/D) is a dry food that contains fibers to help remove plaque, tartar, and even stains from your pets' teeth. Hard dental treats, such as Grinders, Greenies, and Dentastix, are hard treats that can be given daily to help remove plaque and tartar from the teeth. Products such as Plaque-Off is a powder that can be sprinkled onto the food to help remove plaque and tartar.

There are many other products that exist to help remove plaque (and sometimes small amounts of tartar) from the teeth. If you want to find out which products are the best for your pet, refer to the Veterinary Oral Health Care website (www.vohc.com) to see what products are approved to reduce periodontal disease. Furthermore, all approved products will have the VOHC label on them!

If you have any further questions about fleas, please feel free to reach out to me or one of our staff members!

Best regards,
Rachel Rielinger, DVM

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