



AT HOME DENTAL CARE

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Did you know that most pets have periodontal disease by age 3? This means not just plaque and tartar visible on the tooth but also bacteria buildup and root disease BELOW the gumline. The gooey buildup (PLAQUE) will mineralize into the rock like TARTAR without at home preventative care. Tartar can only be removed by professional cleaning and by the time it forms, disease below the surface is likely. This can lead to rotten teeth and infected jaw bones. Bacteria and disease in the mouth can also spread to the heart, liver and kidneys.

For more info on dental disease and care in pets, check out Veterinary Partner.com:

<https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=4951515!>

Now you know **WHY** at home care is so important. Let's move on to the **WHEN**:

WHEN DO I NEED TO START?

- You can start getting your pet used to brushing when they are very young. Just remember that if they are teething, brushing could be painful and set up negative associations for the future. • DAILY! Do SOMETHING every day...Brushing, a dental chew, a water additive, etc. Daily home care is the goal!
- Note: Never use chew treats or attempt to brush if your pet has had any type of surgery in their mouth in the last 2 weeks.

And now for the **HOW**:

HOW DO I DO IT?

The main players in at home care:

- BRUSHING – Ideally daily but at a minimum of 3 times/ week
- CHEWS and TOYS – See our recommendations on the next page for safe, effective products
- WATER / FOOD ADDITIVES

BRUSHING

-Studies have shown that brushing 3-4 times PER WEEK is required to MAINTAIN healthy teeth/gums (ie in young animals without tartar or those who have just had a veterinary cleaning) but DAILY brushing is

needed to control existing gingivitis/disease. The once a visit “cleaning” that your groomer offers may remove some plaque to improve the appearance of the teeth but is not addressing the disease below the gumline or the damage from bacteria as professional cleaning and regular at home care can. Even if your pet won’t tolerate frequent brushing, most pet toothpaste contains an enzyme that will reduce oral bacteria, so just making contact with the teeth/ gumline is beneficial! So, grab a brush, a finger brush, a piece of fabric like a small washcloth or even just your finger and get that toothpaste on those teeth!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Pet toothpaste
- Small soft bristled baby toothbrush OR pet toothbrush
- Washcloth/gauze if your pet won’t tolerate a brush

GENERAL TECHNIQUE:

Toothbrushing should be enjoyable for your pet. Start slow. This process may take weeks. Start by getting your pet comfortable with you touching their mouth and lifting their lips, and eventually sliding your finger into their mouth. Reward often with small treats for positive reinforcement. Once they are comfortable with you handling their lips/mouth let your pet get used to the toothpaste on your finger before introducing it on the brush. Let them sniff and taste it. Use your finger to apply it and then slowly graduate to the brush/cloth. Strive for 30 seconds of brushing the outer surface of the teeth on each side 3-4 times per week.

CHECK OUT THESE YOUTUBE VIDEOS FOR

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO BRUSH YOUR PETS TEETH:

QUICK/BASIC HOW TO: FOR PETS WHO ARE HEAD SHY:

<https://youtu.be/54WroRd1GiA> <https://youtu.be/SfsUfaeeXKY>

HOW TO START SLOW SO YOUR PET WILL LOVE GETTING THEIR TEETH BRUSHED:

<https://youtu.be/kIEwkQ9EfCE>

DO'S AND DON'T'S OF BRUSHING YOUR PET'S TEETH:

- DON'T use human toothpaste
- DON'T attempt to brush the inside surface of the teeth. Saliva enzymes clean this surface more than the outer surfaces. The surface of the teeth contacting the “lips” is the most important to brush.
- DON'T perform home care during the first 2 weeks after a dental procedure
- DO try the toothpaste WITHOUT a brush first so that your pet gets used to the flavor before having the brush in their mouth. Drooling is ok! Some pets actually do better without toothpaste.
- DO start young – get your pet used to the brush starting at 9 months old
- DO try brushes vs finger brushes vs wipes. Your pet may accept one better than another.
- DO try to perform home care DAILY

DENTAL CHEWS, TREATS AND TOYS

WITH SO MANY CHEWS AND TOYS AVAILABLE, THERE IS NO WAY TO MAKE A DO AND DON'T LIST

FOR THESE! THERE ARE A FEW CARDINAL RULES TO REMEMBER, HOWEVER:

IF IT WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE TO SMACK YOURSELF IN THE KNEECAP WITH THE PRODUCT... DON'T ALLOW YOUR PET TO CHEW ON IT.

EDIBLE CHEWS/ TREATS: BE MINDFUL OF HOW MANY TIMES PER WEEK THE PRODUCT IS MEANT TO BE INGESTED... UNLESS IT IS FORMULATED TO BE A DAILY TREAT, STICK TO 2-3 TIMES PER WEEK.

COW HOOVES AND MARROW BONES ARE NOT APPROPRIATE CHEW TOYS AS THEY ARE TOO HARD AND CAN EASILY BREAK TEETH. IF YOU REALLY WANT TO USE E A MARROW BONE...TRY GOAT INSTEAD, BUT STILL WITH CAUTION!

ALWAYS SUPERVISE YOUR PET – ANY CHEW OR TOY CAN BE SWALLOWED IN A LARGE CHUNK AND LEAD TO CHOKING OR INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION. TAKE AWAY THINGS THAT GET WHITTLED DOWN INTO SMALL PIECES AS THEY CHEW.

PUPPIES: UNTIL THEIR ADULT TEETH COME IN (6 MONTHS) STICK WITH CHEW TOYS/ THINGS THAT ARE NOT MEANT TO BE EATEN/SWALLOWED. ONCE THEY HAVE THEIR ADULT TEETH AT 6 MONTHS, YOU CAN BEGIN TO GET THEM USED TO CHEW BONES, BUT STICK WITH ONES FORMULATED FOR PUPPIES (GREENIES PUPPY CHEWS) OR BLAND ENOUGH TO NOT UPSET THEIR STOMACH (VEGGIEDENT FR3SH CHEWS).

WATER / FOOD ADDITIVES

THESE PRODUCTS ARE MEANT TO BE ADDED TO YOUR PETS' WATER BOWL DAILY. EVEN EVERY OTHER DAY USE, ALTERNATING WITH A BRUSHING OR A DENTAL CHEW, IS A GREAT WAY TO USE THEM.

- The VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) is picky about these products. Only one company has won their seal of approval for controlling plaque: **PET ESSENTIALS HEALTHY MOUTH WATER ADDITIVE**. You can purchase them from us or directly from their website: [HealthyMouth.com](https://www.healthyMouth.com)
- There are SO many of these products on the market – find one that your pet likes and **DOESN'T CONTAIN CHLORHEXIDINE OR XYLITOL** and use it up to every single day.
 - Our Favorite is **Perio Support Advanced Food/ Water Additive**
- These are a great option for cats who don't always allow brushing or eat chews.

WIPES, SPRAYS/RINSES, GELS

THESE PRODUCTS CAN BE USEFUL IN PETS (ESPECIALLY CATS) WHO WILL NOT TOLERATE FREQUENT BRUSHING, CHEW ON DENTAL CHEWS, OR DRINK WATER ADDITIVES.

- Most wipes and rinses are still meant for frequent use (3-4 times/week) but some gel products

are formulated to be applied to the gumline weekly and can be a good alternative to brushing. Check out our favorite weekly gel, **ORAVET GEL** and our favorite wipes, DentAcetic, available through our online retailer at [Vetsource](https://www.vetsource.com). You can purchase our favorite rinse, **CHLORAZINC RINSE** directly from RCVH.

OUR FAVORITE PRODUCT LIST: IF TEXT IS BLUE, THEY ARE AVAILABLE DIRECTLY FROM RCVH

- Toothpaste: [C.E.T](#) and Vetradent pet toothpaste
- Chews: [OraVet](#) chews, [VeggieDent FR3SH Chews](#), C.E.T Enzymatic rawhides, [Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets Crunchy Bites Feline Treats](#), [C.E.T. Intellident Cat Bites](#)
- Water Additive: [Healthy Mouth Pet ESSENTIALS](#)
- Rinses/Wipes/Gels: [ChloraZinc Rinse](#), Vetradent spray and wipes, DentAcetic dental wipes (cats/small dogs)

VISIT [VOHC.ORG](https://www.vohc.org) FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF PRODUCTS APPROVED FOR USE BY A GROUP OF TODAY'S LEADING VETERINARY DENTAL SPECIALISTS.