

Brush My Cat/Dog's What?!

What would happen if you stopped brushing your own teeth? Even if you only ate hard food as some dogs and cats do, there still would be problems. Your pet's teeth must be brushed daily if you can manage it. It is not as difficult as you might imagine.

What are the benefits? Brushing removes the daily accumulation of plaque from teeth. Although dogs and cats do not commonly get cavities, they do suffer from periodontal disease. If untreated, gum disease can lead to pain, infection of vital organs, and loss of teeth.

How To Brush Teeth

• Step 1 - Pick an appropriate tooth brush.

Save yourself the time - do not buy a child's toothbrush with bristles too hard for small animals. The ideal toothbrush will have a long handle, an angled head to better fit in the mouth, and extra soft bristles. Cat toothbrushes are made with small handles and fine bristles to easily fit into smaller mouths. Finger toothbrushes are also available that fit over the tip of your finger.

• Step 2 - Select the appropriate toothpaste.

The best toothpastes contain enzymes that help control plaque. Avoid toothpastes with baking sodas, detergents, or salt. Human toothpastes are not used because they are not made to be swallowed. Fluoride may be incorporated to help control bacteria. Rather than plain then paste on the top of the brush, try to incorporate it between the bristles.

• Step 3 - Get the brush with paste into your dog's or cat's mouth and begin brushing.

Most pets accept brushing if they are approached in a gentle manner. If you start when they are young, it is quite easy, but even older pets will accept the process. Start slowly, using a washcloth or piece of gauze to wipe the teeth. Do this twice daily for about two weeks, and your pet will become familiar with the approach. Then take the pet toothbrush, soak it in warm water, and start brushing daily for several days. When your pet accepts this brushing, add the pet toothpaste.

• Step 4 - The toothbrush bristles should be placed at a 45 - degree angle at the gum margin, where the teeth and the gums meet.

Movement should be in an oval pattern. Beside to gently place the bristle ends into the area around the base of the tooth as well as into spaces between the teeth. Ten short back and forth motions are completed, and then the brush is moved to a new location. Cover three to four teeth at a time. Most attention should be given to the outside of the upper teeth.

How to Make the Toothbrushing Experience a Positive One

1. Choose an area of the house that is comfortable for you and your pet. Your pet should be lying on its side or sitting.
2. Start by handling the lips and gently running the teeth with your fingers, without a toothbrush or paste. If your dog or cat objects, stop and repeat later. Eventually extend the oral handling time (without a brush) from two to four minutes.
3. Rub the teeth with a piece of cheesecloth dipped in bouillon and wrapped around the index finger. Start with the front teeth, and as your pet becomes accustomed to the process, venture toward the cheek teeth.
4. Dogs like the last of garlic. Unless your dog is in danger of having heart failure, dip a soft - bristled toothbrush into a solution of garlic salt and water. Let your dog lick the brush. Your pet will soon realize that the toothbrush bristles
5. When your pet is comfortable with this procedure, switch to a veterinary toothpaste and toothpaste.
6. Do not use your toothpaste because it may cause vomiting due to the detergents that should not be swallowed.
7. The toothbrush is placed at a 45 - degree angle to the gum line. Bristles are placed at the gingival margin. A short back and forth or circular motion allowing the bristles to remain under the gingival margin is necessary to control plaque. Ten strokes in each area on the gum line are sufficient.