

# Dental Hygiene

Pet's Need Dental Care Too

*Start Early  
It's Easy!*

Home oral hygiene can make a tremendous difference in your pet's comfort and health. All dogs and cats should have a daily oral care routine. Anything you can do to help prevent plaque accumulation will pay big dividends. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, most dogs and cats show evidence of periodontal disease by the age of 3 if untreated.

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of the body, such as the heart, lungs, and kidneys. Keep in mind that 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 will be of no long-term benefit. Therefore, it is important to make time for daily brushing, regular veterinary exams and cleanings, and a healthy diet.

If food particles are not removed, they can mix with saliva and bacteria to form plaque. Within a few days, plaque calcifies and hardens into tartar, which provides a home for more plaque buildup. This may result in gingivitis. Gingivitis may develop into a more serious form of periodontal disease called periodontitis, which is *irreversible* and can lead to eventual tooth loss. Left untreated, the bacteria associated with periodontal disease may spread to other parts

Taking care of your pet's teeth and gums can be something they enjoy! Along with flavored toothpastes, there are delicious snacks such as Purina's DH bites, certain rawhide treats, and even some chew toys that can help with maintenance. Discuss your pet's oral hygiene with our veterinarians, and together we can come up with a personalized treatment plan to last a lifetime.

- Make sure to avoid human toothpastes. There are toothpastes made specifically for cats and dogs (and they come in pet approved flavors).
- Brushes also come specifically designed for animals in angles that assist in reaching the back of their mouths. There are also finger brushes available.

*Oral Care  
Pointers*

