

Information Sheet

Dental Care for Dogs and Cats

Tooth brushing

Whilst dental disease is very common in older pets it is important to remember that most dental disease is treatable and the vast majority of the disease is preventable. Daily tooth brushing is the most effective way of removing plaque and preventing dental disease.

Patience and persistence may be required, but most pets will accept some degree of home care.

How to brush your pet's teeth

1. Make the pet comfortable and approach from the side rather than in front.
2. Start by rubbing the toothpaste* on the teeth with your finger or finger brush. Only once this is accepted progress to a soft toothbrush.
3. Brush the teeth in a circular motion that includes the gums and crowns of the teeth.
4. Start with just a few teeth and gradually increase the number of teeth cleaned in a single session.
5. The mouth does not need to be opened, it is mainly the outside surfaces of the teeth, where the gums and tooth meet which need brushing.
6. Offer a reward at the end of the procedure eg. a game or a treat (not chocolate or biscuits!) include tooth brushing as part of the daily routine.

Home care is far more likely to be acceptable to an older dog if it is introduced as an extension of a pre-existing routine e.g. evening meal, walk or grooming.

*always use a toothpaste specially formulated for pets

Something to get his teeth into

Although brushing is the most effective way of removing plaque, other methods can be used if brushing has proved unsuccessful.

Chewing

The use of products aimed at encouraging chewing activity may be beneficial as it stimulates salivation, flushing the mouth with natural plaque retardants and physically removes some plaque from the teeth.

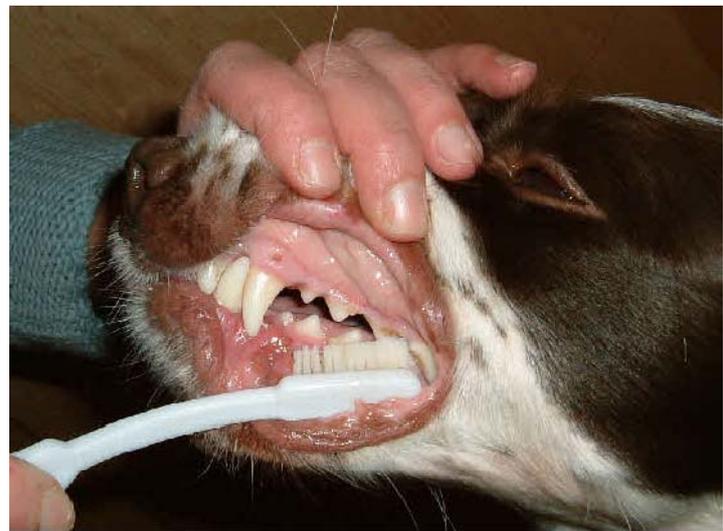
A variety of chewing products are available, rawhide chews have shown to be the most effective material. It is recommended that dogs are encouraged to chew daily, preferably shortly after eating their main meal.

Diet

There are specially formulated diets such as Hills T/D which contain special fibres which allow the tooth to penetrate rather than shatter the kibble. This helps wipe plaque, tartar and staining from the tooth's surface right down to the gum line.

Regular examinations

Just like us, pets need regular dental examinations to check for and treat potential problems before they develop into painful conditions.



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