



# DENTAL CARE for Pets



*Can you imagine not brushing your teeth for weeks...months...years?* That's often what happens with pets! Dental care is important for pets because it impacts so much: Poor dental health can make eating difficult, cause infections, and damage organs.

## So what can you do?

- 1) **Brush your pets' teeth!** It helps the gums and removes food particles. Use a toothpaste specially made for pets (do not use human toothpaste), or just use water and a toothbrush or wash cloth. Even frequent brushing or rubbing of the gums can go far in protecting your pets' health. And when you stay on top of it, you'll notice any problems right when they start.
- 2) **Provide chew toys or treats.** It's good for the gums and helps teeth remain strong and firmly in place.
- 3) **Feed hard kibble** (instead of soft canned food). Check with your veterinarian before changing your pet's food.
- 4) **Bring your pet to the veterinarian** yearly for a check-up and examination of your pet's teeth.

Sometimes, pets need dental work at a veterinary hospital. This may be just a cleaning, or it may include removing bad teeth and other procedures.



## What happens during a dental procedure?

- 1) Pets go into an operating room for the procedure. Veterinarians clean the tartar from their teeth.
- 2) Veterinarians look for infections, lumps and bumps, gum problems and bad teeth.
- 3) They may also perform dental x-rays to get a better look.
- 4) Loose, damaged or infected teeth are often removed.

Pets may get medication to help them with any discomfort afterwards.

Good dental care through proper food, treats and toys, monitoring by you and your family, and proper veterinary care will go far in protecting your pet's dental and overall health.

## Ease into tooth-brushing.

(Always with an adult's help)

- Talk with your veterinarian. Determine if your pet will tolerate tooth-brushing (as a safety precaution).
- Allow your pet to sniff the toothbrush multiple times. Give a treat for each session!
- Put a pea-sized amount of pet toothpaste on the toothbrush and let your pet sniff it. Brush a few of his teeth by running the toothbrush along the teeth and gums, and end the session. Repeat once a day or every few days, as your pet allows.
- Gradually increase the amount of teeth brushed over time.
- Give a treat after each session!

**February is**

**National Pet Dental Health Month**



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CCSS.ELA-Literacy:Informational Text 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.5, 8.3, 9-10.1

