



Dental Care

Teeth Brushing

Why should you brush your pet's teeth?

Brushing your pet's teeth regularly removes the accumulation of plaque from the teeth. Pets can get cavities; can suffer from gum disease, called gingivitis; and disease of the bone surrounding the teeth, called periodontal disease. Gingivitis and periodontal disease can be very painful for your pet, and it can lead to loss of teeth. By brushing your pet's teeth, you will be helping to prevent the occurrence of these diseases.

How to brush teeth:

1. Introduce a brushing program to pets gradually. Avoid over-restraining your pet and keep brushing sessions short and positive. If comfortable, your pet can be held in your lap. Praise and reassure your pet throughout the process.
2. At first, dip a finger into beef or chicken broth, tuna water or any other liquid your pet may like. **BE CAREFUL!** Rub the soaked finger gently over the pet's mouth and teeth. Make the initial sessions short and positive.
3. Gradually, introduce a soft toothbrush designed for pets. Special pet toothbrushes are available at your veterinarian or a specialty pet store. When you introduce the toothbrush, first use water or liquid of preference.
4. The last step is to start using toothpaste in combination with the toothbrush. Don't use toothpaste designed for people because it could upset the animal's stomach. We recommend C.E.T. enzymatic toothpaste. Allow your pet to drink water after you are done brushing. There is no need to rinse the mouth out.

Professional Dental Cleaning:

As humans, most of us visit the dentist every 6-12 months for a professional cleaning. We recommend that your pet receive a cleaning every year to maintain good oral health. It is important that we use general anesthesia for dental procedures, because even the most well-mannered pets won't sit still for a thorough dental cleaning. With our patients under anesthesia, we are able to perform a thorough inspection of all teeth and get the teeth cleaned properly. If you have concerns regarding anesthesia, our doctors would be glad to discuss them with you.

When should you schedule your pet's first dental?

- For small breed dogs and cats, we recommend that they have their first cleaning at 1-1 ½ years of age.
- For medium-sized breeds, we recommend that they have their first cleaning at 2-3 years of age.
- For larger breeds we recommend a first cleaning at 3-4 years of age.

This is a general guideline—each pet has their own specific dental cleaning needs. It is important to bring your pet in yearly for a complete physical and dental exam.