

# Home Dental Care for Pets

Veterinarians recommend that most pets receive a professional veterinary dental cleaning each year. And, just as we humans brush our teeth every day in between our professional dental cleanings, the best way to keep your pet's teeth and gums healthy in between professional veterinary dental cleanings is daily home care.

Following are some tips to get you started. Move on to the next step only when your pet is ready. The training period to get your pet used to having its teeth brushed can range from a few weeks to a few months. Be patient and go slow; let your pet's temperament guide the process. And be sure to offer plenty of praise along the way.

Daily dental  
care at home,  
including  
tooth  
brushing,  
will keep  
your pet's  
teeth—and  
your pet—  
healthy!

## Step 1

Establish a foundation of trust between you and your pet. A few times a day, lift its lip and gently touch its teeth.

## Step 2

Let your pet lick a flavored enzymatic pet toothpaste off of your finger. Flavors pets love include poultry, malt, beef or seafood. Repeat this daily and your pet will soon be used to this "treat."

## Step 3

Next, progress to rubbing your pet's teeth with a gauze or finger toothbrush. You can try this with or without toothpaste.

## Step 4

Using a soft-bristled toothbrush, brush the pet's teeth in gentle, circular motions, starting with the outside of the upper teeth. Brush from the gumline to the tip of the tooth. The gums may be sensitive, so you may see some blood when you first start to brush.

## Step 5

Over time, if your pet is comfortable with it, progress to brushing the outer sides of the lower teeth, and finally, the inner side of the teeth, if possible. The key is to only do as much as you—and your pet—are comfortable with.



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