

10 Steps to a Happier and Healthier Mouth

This is how we recommend to brush

1. If your dog is small then lift them up to an easy working height
2. Have your dog sit facing you
3. Initially rub the face and muzzle so your dog is used to you touching this area. You should aim to do this for 30 seconds and then reward either with fuss, play, a small treat or all of the above! Repeat daily for at least 5 days
4. Have your dog face you in the sitting position and close the mouth with your least dominant hand, fingers on top of the nose and thumb under the jaw. Apply a small amount of doggy tooth paste to a finger tip, or finger brush, on your dominant hand and then rub this on to the teeth. Please don't use human tooth paste on your pet as the fluoride can be toxic to your pet if swallowed
5. By having the mouth closed the lips are relaxed and it's much easier to reach the back teeth, your dog won't immediately lick off all of the tooth paste and it won't be uncomfortable
6. Start from the canine teeth and work backwards
7. Most dogs find the incisors at the front of the mouth very sensitive, therefore only brush these once your dog has become used to the other teeth being brushed
8. Once your dog is happy with the above, progress on to a toothbrush. A doggy tooth brush or child's soft bristled, small headed toothbrush are perfect. Electric toothbrushes are surprisingly well tolerated as well!
9. For most of us our right hands are dominant so it is easier to brush the left side of your dog's mouth. For this reason we recommend starting on the opposite side. We have seen dogs where on one side of the mouth the teeth are pristine and the other is covered in tartar
10. When you start brushing you will notice a small amount of blood on the tooth brush. As you continue to brush this will stop as you are treating the gum disease responsible for the bleeding. If it doesn't stop then please come and see our dental team

If you find the above easy and your pet is very tolerant, consider that it is not just the teeth you are brushing but also the gum. To do this you will need to look at what you are brushing. Angle the tooth brush so that the bristles gently clean the gutter of gum around the base of each tooth. This is diploma level brushing though!

Brushing is by far the best method of keeping your pet's teeth clean but there are some things that can be used in addition that can help to keep gums and teeth healthy.

Gels and Oral rinses

These products contain Chlorhexadine which is effective in killing bacteria in the mouth. It is these bacteria that form plaque and that cause the damage to gums and teeth. Chlorhexadine also has a residual action and will continue to fight bacteria for 18 hours after it's use. We particularly recommend these products in cats as a cotton wool bud dipped in a gel and wiped on the gum and tooth is tolerated well by most patients. The rinses are especially useful if gums are too sore to brush especially immediately after a dental treatment.

Specialist Diets

After each professional cleaning at Eastcott Vets you will receive a free bag of Hills Tooth diet. This is a great product for both cats and dogs as an adjunct to brushing. This is a premier quality diet with the added benefit of cleaning the teeth as your pet chews. The kibbles are slightly bigger than average to encourage chewing, they come in 3 sizes to match your pet, but the biscuit is also softer than average and has a high fibre content. The fibre in the biscuit is aligned all in a single direction and as your pet chews this fibre cleans the surface of the tooth. The softer consistency allows the tooth to penetrate deeply in to the biscuit before it cleaves and doesn't just shatter as with hard biscuits, increasing the cleaning benefits. Hard biscuits have been suggested as a possible cause of damage to cat's teeth that can result in painful cavities, resorptive lesions, developing on the gums and as a result the softer consistency of the tooth diet may help to reduce this damage.

Dental Chews

Dental chews can help to reduce tartar formation on teeth and our pets love the taste, which is reason enough to give them. Do not rely on them as a sole means of home hygiene though.

Dietary Additives

There are products that can be added to diets or to drinking water which claim to reduce plaque formation. Potentially these are of great use to our patients as an adjunct to brushing; however, we do not have enough information on their effectiveness or safety for us at Eastcott to feel comfortable recommending them to you. Watch this space as we will keep you informed of any new information.

If you require any further information please contact 01793 528341 where our Dental team will be pleased to help you and your pet.

Resource
Centre



Eastcott Vets Resource Centre