



## **PET DENTAL CARE 101**

### **Quick Facts:**

#### **DOGS**

- Puppies develop 28 temporary teeth at two to three weeks of age. Their 42 permanent teeth emerge at about four months.
- Studies show that, by age 3, 80 percent of dogs exhibit signs of gum disease.
- Small dog breeds are more likely than large breeds to develop periodontal disease. Canine dentistry experts believe this is because the teeth of small dogs often are too large for their mouths, forcing the teeth closer together.

#### **CATS**

- Kittens have about 26 temporary teeth at two to three weeks of age. Their 30 permanent teeth erupt at about three to four months.
- According to studies, about 70 percent of cats have signs of gum disease by age 3.
- Cervical line lesions are the most common tooth disease in domestic cats. Studies show that about 28 percent of domestic cats develop at least one of these painful lesions during their lifetime.

### **Dental Home Care:**

The American Veterinary Dental Society considers daily brushing the single most important aspect of regular dental care. In addition to daily brushing, dental treats, toys and therapeutic diets can be a part of your pet's home care and may delay the need for further dentistry. How quickly your pet will develop periodontal disease (inflammation/infection of some or all of the tooth's support structures) and when your pet will need periodontal therapy depends on many variables. These variables include: proper home care, diet, age, breed and size of patient, health status, and most importantly, genetic disposition. Just like humans, some pets are born with better mouths than others.

For more information online, please visit: [www.VeterinaryPartner.com](http://www.VeterinaryPartner.com) and search Dental Home Care and the Dental Care series. In addition, Family Pet's website library ([www.FamilyPetAnimalHospital.com](http://www.FamilyPetAnimalHospital.com)) features a link to a video on how to brush your cat's teeth! The direct address for this video is [http://partnersah.vet.cornell.edu/pet/fhc/brushing\\_teeth](http://partnersah.vet.cornell.edu/pet/fhc/brushing_teeth)

#### **Do's and Don'ts**

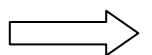
- Don't use a human toothpaste on your pet
- Do use a toothbrush without any paste at first so that your pet may get used to the object in the mouth before having to contend with flavor
- Don't attempt to clean the inner surface of your pet's teeth. Natural saliva cleans this surface on its own
- Do try to perform dental home care at least once daily
- Don't let your dog chew on cow hooves or bones as these are too hard and teeth may break against them

### **TREATS and FOODS that can help keep your pet's mouth healthy:**

Products that have received the VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) seal of acceptance to date include:

Hill's Prescription Diet® t/d™ (feline and canine), Science Diet® Oral Care™ diets, Friskies® Feline Dental Diet, Del Monte Tartar Check® dog biscuits, Friskies® Cheweez™ beefhide treats, Iams Chunk Dental Defense® diet (canine), Eukanuba® Adult Maintenance diet (canine), Hartz® Flavor Infused Oral Chews (canine), Purina Veterinary Diets® DH Dental Health™ (canine and feline), Purina Veterinary Diets® Dental Chews (canine), Vetradent Dog Chews ('Bluechews' and 'dc Dental Chews'), Tartar Shield Soft Rawhide Chews (canine) and Canine Greenies®, healthymouth water™ (cat/dog) \*\*\*For more information, visit the VOHC Web site at [www.vohc.org](http://www.vohc.org).

***Turn the page – You can teach your pet to enjoy having its teeth brushed!***



# USING BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES TO TEACH YOUR PET TO ENJOY HAVING ITS TEETH BRUSHED!

*If a tiger can be taught to jump through a ring of fire, it is possible for you to teach your pet to accept oral hygiene care. You must begin the process slowly ~ It may be several weeks before you are actually brushing the teeth.*

- Have tiny bits of a food your pet LOVES available.
- Pick a time when they are likely to be hungry.
- Pick quiet time.....not the first thing after you get home from work.
- As long as they are quiet, responding to requests, and allowing you to manipulate their mouths, they get IMMEDIATE food treats. If they resist in any fashion....you take your treats away and end the session.
- Use a calm, gentle tone of voice.
- A small dog may work best on your lap; a cat probably would be best next to you on a large chair or couch; a large dog should be asked to sit on the floor.
- Begin a brief time of affectionate touching and giving treats if they are staying calm.
- Next, lightly touch around the face and lips. If they remain still, give an IMMEDIATE reward. If they pull away or resist...end the session and try again in a little while.
- Slowly - over the course of many sessions - progress from manipulating the lips, to running your fingers along the teeth and gums, then add in a moist soft cloth on your finger, then add veterinary toothpaste on the cloth.
- THEN bring the toothbrush out, touch it to their face, put it under their lips and gently work it around. Concentrate on the outside surface of the teeth under the lips. It is more difficult to get on the tongue side of the teeth. A variety of toothbrush types is available, and actual brushing is ideal. Sometimes, however, we only use the soft cloth or Q-tip ~ It doesn't have to be a brush.
- This process may take several weeks. There may be two steps forward and one step backward.....Hang in there!
- The goal would be to spend two or three minutes every day brushing your pet's teeth.

**Please ask us for assistance. We would be happy to coach you with your timing and techniques!**

*Courtesy of Cindy Charlier, DVM, DAVDC*

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