



Dental Home Care Information for Pet Owners

Dental care for your pet is a team approach with you as a vital player. Our job is to provide an accurate diagnosis and effective treatment for the diseases of the mouth. Your job is to provide consistent and effective home care. In as little as three hours after a professional cleaning, bacterial plaque is present on the teeth. This slimy substance can easily be removed with a toothbrush. Once the plaque is removed, it prevents the inflammatory response known as *gingivitis*, which is the precursor to periodontal disease. Periodontal disease causes pain and infection which has been tied to diseases of the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. Think of your pet's teeth much like your own in regard to the care you provide and the benefits of these methods. The following is a concise breakdown of available home care methods.

Tooth Brushing

- Most effective and least expensive home care method
- Twice daily is ideal, but even once daily is beneficial
- Most pets can be trained to accept brushing, even if it is not started until they are adults
- Visit www.felinevideos.vet.cornell.edu/brushing_teeth/index.shtml for an instructional video



Oral Rinses

- Have an antiseptic action against bacteria
- Moderately effective compared to brushing
- Applied once daily after feeding

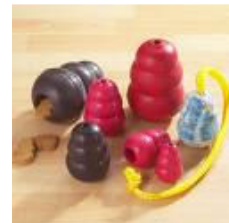
Dental Diets (Hill's Prescription Diet t/d)

- Most convenient
- Specially designed food nugget reduces plaque as pet chews



Dental Friendly Chews

- Convenient for owner and entertaining for pet
- Need to be hard enough to help remove plaque, but not hard enough to damage the teeth
 - ❑ should be able to be indented with your thumbnail
 - ❑ should be able to be bent at a 90° angle
 - ❑ basic rule of thumb- if you would not want to be hit in the kneecap with it, it's too hard!
- We recommend CET Chews, Greenies, or Kong Toys



Barrier Sealant (Oravet)

- Helps prevent plaque from adhering to the teeth
- Must be applied initially at dental cleaning time, then maintained with weekly application at home

One last resource is the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) which is an independent corporation that puts products to the test. If they pass the testing for effectiveness, they receive their approval and stamp. For a list of dental products that meet their standards, visit www.VOHC.org.