



# How to Brush Your Pet's Teeth

Remember, this should be fun for you and your pet! Be upbeat and take things slowly. Try to start a session when you are relaxed and not pressured for time. Do not overly restrain your pet. Keep sessions short and positive and be sure to praise your dog throughout the process.

## Step 1:

First, have your pet get used to you putting things in its mouth. Place a small amount of flavored pet toothpaste on your finger. Let your pet lick some off your finger and then apply it to your pet's gum line with your finger. Get your pet used to the flavor and consistency of the toothpaste. Praise your pet.

## Step 2:

Next place a gauze around your finger. Again apply a small amount of flavored paste to the gauze. Gently rub the teeth in a circular motion with your gauzed finger. Repeat this for the number of sessions it takes your pet to feel comfortable with this procedure. Remember to praise him and keep an upbeat attitude.

## Step 3:

After your pet is used to having the flavored gauze in his mouth, you are ready to start with a toothbrush, dental sponge, or pad. To begin, get your pet used to the consistency of these items, especially the bristles on a brush. One way is letting him lick something tasty off of the brush so he gets used to the texture.

## Step 4:

Now that your pet is used to the toothbrush and toothpaste you are ready to start brushing. Talk to your pet in a happy voice during the process and praise your pet at the end. At first, you may just want to brush one or both upper canine teeth (the largest ones in the front of the mouth). These are the easiest teeth for you to get at and will give you easier practice. As before, when your pet accepts having several teeth brushed, slowly increase the number of teeth you are brushing. Be sure to brush the teeth in the back of the mouth (these teeth can become problem teeth). Again, by making it appear to be a game, you both will have fun doing it.

## How often should I brush?

Certainly, the more often you brush the better. Always aim for daily dental care for your pet, just as you aim for daily care for yourself. The hardest thing about home dental care for your pet is just getting started. Once you have done it for awhile, it just becomes part of your daily routine.

Plaque builds up on the tooth surface daily, especially just under the gum line. It takes less than 36 hours for this plaque to become mineralized and harden into 'tartar' (calculus) that cannot be removed with a brush. Because of this progression, brushing should be done daily, to remove the plaque from under the gum line.