



Caring for Your Pet's Teeth

Imagine how your teeth would look if you didn't clean them every day or visit the dentist! The same is true of our pets. It is estimated that 85% of pets over three years old need dental treatment.

- **Bad breath- (halitosis)** is often the first sign of disease but can progress to pain and trouble eating.
- **Plaque**-sticky film of bacteria, saliva and food which coats the surface of your pet's teeth.
- **Tartar (calculus)** -accumulation of calcified plaque and food minerals.
- This in turn will promote **more** bacteria to grow and these can pass into the blood via sore gums.
- **Gingivitis and periodontal disease** - two of the most common problems presented to vets.
- These bacteria can travel to parts of the body and be detrimental to patients with internal organ disease including heart disease.

Preventative/early disease options:

Brushing of your pets teeth on a daily basis is the **best form** of preventative care.

If you have not brushed your pet's teeth before, approach the venture gradually and patiently. Always use **pet toothpaste**; human toothpastes are very high in **fluoride** which if consumed by your pet can be poisonous. Virbac enzymatic toothpaste comes in two flavours (fish and poultry) and the enzyme is activated by brushing. These come in handy starter packs.

Brushing top tips

Get your pet used to being handled around the mouth before using the toothpaste and then eventually the finger brush and toothbrush.

- The **younger** your pet is when you first attempt tooth brushing, the more likely it is that they will accept it on a regular basis



- Choose a time when you are not rushed and

also when you are likely to have your **pet's full attention**, for example before feeding. Once your pet has become used to tooth brushing it makes sense to switch brushing to **after food**.

- Sit behind your pet with them at your chest height.

- Let them get used to the taste of the toothpaste before you attempt brushing.
- Start by brushing just a few teeth every day before progressing to the whole set.
- **Reward** your pet every time they allow brushing of their teeth. Give lots of praise and perhaps a game with a favourite toy. If you really want to reward with food use a few nuggets of dried food, preferably Hills t/d™ or Hills Vet Essentials™

Never force your pet to stay and have their teeth brushed. It is better to stop and try again later, rather than to use force and turn it into an unpleasant experience.



Dental chews are very popular and can be very effective to use in conjunction with tooth brushing. These are designed to remove plaque as your pet chews on them. All the following chews/treats are VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) approved.

- 1) Hills Canine/Feline t/d and Vet Essentials dry food.
- 2) Whiskas Dentabites (not Denta-bits).
- 3) Virbac Veggiedent dental chews
- 4) Greenies dental chews.



Here at House and Jackson we recommend regular dental checks. This can be **free of charge** consultations with our **qualified veterinary nurses**. The consult will include an examination of the mouth and a discussion of what prevention treatment **plan** is best for you and your pet.

Dental intervention

If the levels of disease is severe enough we may have to recommend some form of dental intervention. This may include a consultation with a veterinary surgeon. They may recommend a general anaesthetic for a **scale and polish** or even the potential for **extractions**.