



Your Dog's  
Dental Health

FREE  
NURSE  
CLINIC

# Why do you need to brush my teeth?

**Food particles and bacteria collect along my gum line and form soft deposits called plaque. Over time, the plaque turns into rock-hard tartar. If tartar is not removed from my teeth, it will eventually inflame my gums causing me pain.**

As the inflamed gums begin to separate from my teeth, pockets form in which more bacteria grow, causing periodontal disease to worsen. At this point, I can experience severe pain, lose teeth, and form abscesses in my mouth.

I will not be able to tell you I am in pain or have toothache.

I can develop a bacterial infection that can spread through the bloodstream to the kidneys, liver, heart or brain causing more widespread illness and disease.

Periodontal disease is irreversible, so now is a great time to get started on a regular oral-care regimen for me. Prevention is the key to keeping me healthy and happy.

You will reduce the chances of putting me through and anesthetic and a dental surgery later in life if you look after my teeth. I would prefer not to have an operation and you will save lots of money!



Prevention is key to avoid bad teeth



# Step by Step Guide

## Get me used to the toothpaste

- Wash and dry your hands and smear a little bit of dog toothpaste on your index finger.
- Let me lick the toothpaste from your finger.
- Repeat two or three times a day.
- Once I am eating the toothpaste well off your finger, begin to start lifting my lips and holding my muzzle. I need to get used to you touching my mouth (This may take some time, as it can be quite worrying for me at first, ensure you do not force or restrain me and that am happy with being held).
- Move on when am happy with you touching and holding my mouth and eating my special toothpaste.

## Get me used to having something in my mouth

- Smear your index finger with toothpaste.
- Gently rub your finger over my teeth and gums.
- Do this slowly and do not put your finger in further than I am comfortable with, and take care with your fingers please.

## Introducing me to the toothbrush

- Wet the toothbrush with water and then smear it with toothpaste on top of the bristles.
- Let me lick some of the toothpaste off the bristles to get used to the feeling.
- Gently hold my mouth around the muzzle to get me use to you holding my mouth and do not let me chew the brush.
- Put your hand across my nose and lifting my lips, gently brush my canines (the big, pointy teeth) up and down. Start by angling the brush towards the gum line and brush away from the gum towards the tip of the tooth.
- At this stage avoid the incisors (the small teeth at the front of my mouth) and holding the front of my nose, as this is the most sensitive area of my mouth.

## Brushing my back teeth

- Start with brushing my Canine teeth up and down as above.
- Slowly move along to the teeth behind the canines, using a circular motion.
- Only go as far as I am happy with and brush both sides of my mouth.

## Brushing all of my teeth

- Always start with the Canine teeth and then the back teeth, and we will finish with brushing my sensitive incisors (I may sneeze when you brush my incisors!).
- To brush the front incisor teeth, hold my mouth around the top of my muzzle and gently lift the upper lip with your thumb and forefinger, to reveal the incisor teeth.
- Gently brush the front teeth up and down.
- Gradually build up the amount of time you spend brushing until you reach two to three minutes. For maximum protection, brush my teeth every day, if you can.



# HINTS & TIPS



- Keep our sessions short – 3 minutes is plenty twice a day once I have been trained to have my teeth brushed.
- I am an individual, go at my pace and please remember to give me lots of praise.
- Use three pea-sized blobs of dog toothpaste – one each for the left, right and front of my mouth.
- Take care putting your fingers into my mouth.

- If I am aggressive or prone to biting, do not try to brush my teeth (please seek advice from a behaviourist).
- Repeat each stage for approximately five days before moving to the next step so I am comfortable and understand each stage.

**Don't hesitate to speak to one of our nurses if you are struggling.**

## The equipment you will need:

- A pet toothbrush with medium bristles (or a finger brush initially).
- A quiet area with few or no distractions.
- Plenty of patience.
- Dog toothpaste – human toothpaste is toxic to dogs.
- Some water.
- You can get a toothbrush kit from any one of our surgeries.



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