

HERVEY BAY VETERINARY SURGERY

Owner Information Series

DENTAL HOMECARE



Over 80% of dogs and 70% of cats over 3 years old have some form of periodontal (dental) disease. Dental disease causes bad breath (halitosis) and pain, it is also a source of infection and can make your pet seriously ill.

Dental disease is preventable in the vast majority of cases and in most cases, easy to achieve at home. There are many different methods to keep your pet's "pearly white" teeth and these should be started while they are puppies and kittens.

For adult cats and dogs with existing dental disease, a dental treatment with a scale and polish under general anaesthetic is often necessary to get their mouth back into top condition. This will allow us to start prevention with a clean mouth which needs to be continued at home to hopefully prevent, or slow down dental disease developing again in the future.

MAINTAINING ORAL HYGIENE

1. Appropriate Food

There is scientific research supporting the use of food as an easy means of helping keep your pets teeth clean. The Hills Science Diet T/D kibble is larger and harder than normal pet food, meaning they can't swallow it whole, and it doesn't go soggy when they chew it. It also has a special fibre matrix within each biscuit which aids in the breakdown of plaque. For best results Hills T/D needs to be fed daily. It is a very palatable food, but if your pet is too fussy to enjoy it there is a money back guarantee. Hills t/d is only available at veterinary clinics. The proportion of t/d used for your

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pet's diet will vary according to the severity and persistence of their dental problems. Hills also produce an Oral Care range which has some of the similar benefits.

2. HealthyMouth™

These products have been shown to work in two different ways: by decreasing overall bacterial loads in your pets mouth, thus aiding with smelly breath, and also softening plaque on the tooth surface. If the plaque is softer, it can be brushed away more easily by appropriate diet, brushing, or chews.

3. Bones

Feeding fresh raw bones and other animal products can greatly aid the hygiene of the mouth. Not every dog or cat can have bones and there are some individuals that have medical conditions or gut sensitivities that prohibit their use within the diet. Un-cut bones are best to reduce the risk of dental fractures, and the size must be larger than their head to avoid swallowing large portions.

Please speak with your veterinary health care professional if you are wanting to discuss your pet's individual needs.

4. Brushing your pet's teeth

Plaque will start to accumulate 12 hours after a scale and polish or brushing, therefore it is no surprise that cats and dogs will benefit from having their teeth brushed.

Brushing is the 'gold standard' method of keeping your pets teeth clean. We brush our teeth multiple times a day - your pets teeth need to be brushed daily too.

There are many dental tooth brush varieties on the market, along with different designs and dental pastes. Many pet dental kits come with a microfibre finger cloth with which to start, toothpaste and a double headed toothbrush, specifically designed for your pets mouth. Finger brushes can also be used.

It is important to note that cats and dogs cannot use fluoride (human) toothpastes and a specific pet dental paste needs to be selected.

Our pets need to be trained to tolerate having their teeth brushed from a young age. Starting as a puppy or kitten is ideal, and gradually developing a system is important. Some steps to guide you are below.

Introduce your pet to teeth brushing

Cats and small dogs may feel more comfortable if they can sit on their owners lap while having their teeth brushed.

- Begin slowly, initial sessions should be brief, a minute or two and well rewarded.
- Get your pet used to the toothbrush by dipping it in tuna juice, chicken or beef stock or just use water.
- Next try offering the toothbrush with the paste, without brushing. Allow your pet to taste the paste.
- When your pet is comfortable with the brush try brushing one or two strokes on a few teeth. Slowly increase the amount of brushing as your pet becomes more comfortable.
- Start at the front of the mouth. Pets are often more accepting of this.

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Using a toothbrush

The toothbrush bristles should be placed at the gum margin where the teeth and gums meet at a 45 degree angle. The movement should be in an oval pattern. Be sure to gently force the bristle ends into the area around the base of the tooth as well as into the space between the teeth.

Place pet dental toothpaste on the brush.



Using your fingers gently pull the gums away. Place the toothbrush on the teeth in a 45 degree angle, and brush.



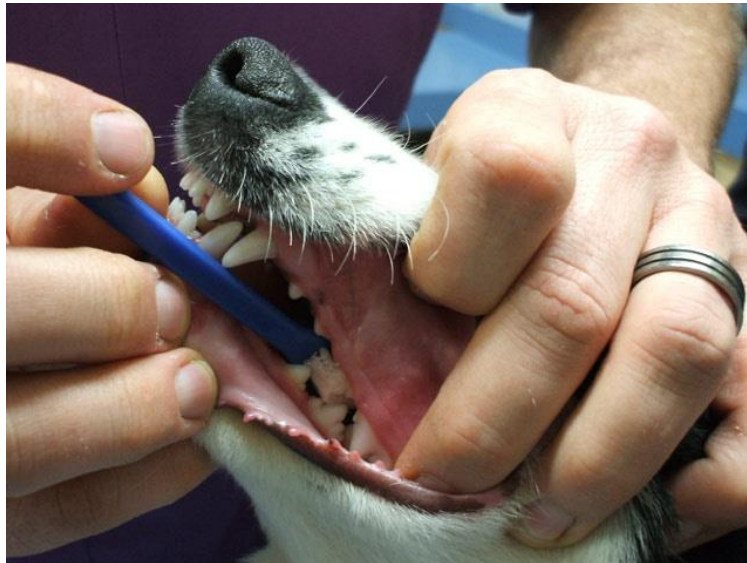
Pay attention to the canines.

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Also the gaps between all teeth, and make sure you brush all the way to the back of the mouth.



Also work inside the mouth, cleaning the back of the teeth.

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Using a finger brush



Place the finger brush on your index finger and apply pet dental toothpaste. Start at the front of the mouth, using an oval movement brush over the front teeth and gum.



Brush to the back of the mouth.

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Also right along the side of the mouth



Moving back and forth.

VETERINARY DENTAL TREATMENTS

In the majority of pet's lives, there comes a time when their teeth may require veterinary treatment over and above their regular examinations. A dental treatment involves a general anaesthetic and a full dental examination, including charting and scaling, both ultrasonically and by hand, and then finishing with a polish. A very similar procedure used by your own dentist. For more information specific to your pet, we encourage you to make an appointment with one of our trained Veterinary Nurses for a complimentary dental check.