

February is National Pet Dental Health Month!

Your pet's dental health is vitally important! Why so? Tartar build-up on your pet's teeth creates an ideal environment for bacteria to multiply. This bacteria can work its way into your pet's bloodstream and lead to serious health conditions, such as periodontal disease. As a result, your pet may suffer from infections, pain, and tooth loss.

Luckily, you can help your pet maintain his or her oral health! Consider these five tips for a healthy smile!

1. Brush Your Pet's Teeth

Human mouths require regular brushing, so it should make sense that your pet's mouth does too! Regular brushing prevents tartar and bacteria from building up in your pet's mouth, meaning fresher breath and less chance for infection.

When brushing your dog or cat's teeth, keep the experience positive by speaking to your pet in a soothing voice throughout the brushing and rewarding your pet with praise or a treat when finished. Only use pet-formulated toothpastes to brush your dog or cat's teeth, as human toothpastes often contain ingredients that are poisonous to pets.

2. Apply Oral Rinses & Gels

Oral rinses and gels target your pet's bad breath and can reduce plaque. As drinking water additives or self-distributing agents, these products require limited contact with your pet's mouth and can be ideal for pets who struggle to accept a toothbrush. Recommended oral rinses and gels include BreathALyser Plus and MAXI/GUARD Oral Cleansing Gel.

3. Choose Dental Treats

Dental treats are a fun and easy way to care for your pet's oral health. Such treats include C.E.T. Oral Hygiene Chews and Greenies. These treats are formulated to appeal to your pet's taste, while also cleaning teeth and freshening breath!

4. Feed Your Pet A Dental Diet

In general, dry foods are less likely than soft foods to stick to your pet's teeth and cause decay. Larger kibble also creates a brushing effect, helping to prevent plaque build-up on your pet's teeth.

For pets who regularly struggle with oral health, specially formulated pet foods can reduce plaque, cut down on tartar build-up, and diminish bad breath. Visit the Hill's Science Diet website to learn more about specially-formulated and prescription diets, or consult with your veterinarian.

5. Play With Chew Toys

When played with regularly, certain chew toys can strengthen your pet's teeth and gums, as well as cut down on tartar build-up. In addition, play time gives you a chance to strengthen your bond with your pet! Consult with your veterinarian when selecting chew toys, as overly hard toys may cause your pet to break teeth.

At-home dental care is a very important part of your pet's overall health, as are regular wellness examinations by a veterinarian. Don't skip out on the chance to get an expert's advice on caring for your pet's oral health! In addition, pets with advanced tartar build-up may require a comprehensive dental cleaning by a veterinarian. For further information on your pet's oral health, schedule an appointment with your veterinarian.