



## TEN TOP TIPS FOR BRUSHING YOUR PET'S TEETH

1. Start toothbrushing as early in life as you can. It is easiest to teach young animals to have their teeth brushed, and prevention is better than cure.
2. Make sure your pet is relaxed and comfortable – sitting in your lap, or being cuddled by another person.
3. Make the initial sessions brief and positive. Don't push the matter if your pet is getting upset. It often takes several weeks for your pet to allow you to use a toothbrush and toothpaste on them without protest.
4. Start by using just your fingertips to rub along the teeth and gums. You can dip your finger into beef stock (dog) or tuna water (cat), or use a dab of a tasty pet toothpaste to make it more acceptable.
5. Approach from the side and start with just a few teeth, gradually increasing the number of teeth as your pet gets used to it.
6. Move up to using a facecloth or small finger brush, and finally onto a very soft bristle brush (which is needed to reach plaque hiding under the gumline).
7. Choose a toothpaste designed for pets. Aside from the more appealing flavour, pet toothpaste is much safer for regular use. Human toothpaste is not designed to be swallowed, and pets are not good at the 'rinse and spit' method.
8. When introducing toothpaste, put a small amount on your finger and let your pet taste it. Then press the paste down into the bristles of the toothbrush so your pet can't just lick it off.
9. Offer a reward at the end of the procedure, such as a walk or a game.
10. Have your pet's teeth examined regularly by your vet. Toothbrushing slows down dental disease, but does not prevent it completely. Humans who brush twice a day still need to have their teeth cleaned professionally, and so do our pets.