



The Easy Way to Brush Teeth

(Keep It Easy and Fun – Use Psychology)

Step 1: Equipment

Consider using the *C.E.T. Oral Hygiene Kit*. The *C.E.T. Toothbrush* handle is extra long, has a large dog and a small dog brush on opposite ends (I always use the large end unless under 5 lbs) that are triangular for easy entry and the bristles are 10x softer than a human child's brush. The *C.E.T. Enzymatic Toothpaste* is non-foaming, meant to be swallowed and the poultry flavor is typically viewed by your pet as a treat. Finger Brushes are not recommended – they don't reach adequately below the gum line.



Step 2: Time and Place and Praise

Pick a quiet time (bedtime or early morning) or right before a fun event (a walk, dinner, ride in the car, etc.). Ask your pet to sit and give lots of praise. For small dogs or short nosed dogs it may be easier to brush if they are lying on a soft surface.

Step 3: Start Slowly and Lovingly and Reward

Stoop down or consider sitting on the floor or do it on your bed. Lovingly talk to your pet while you stroke the head gently and gently stroke the outside of your pet's muzzle and lips (never do anything that might cause your pet to bite and do not risk being bitten). When the pet appears comfortable, place a dab of toothpaste on a finger and allow licking with lots of praise and a treat. Even if days are required before your pet is comfortable, be patient. When your pet is accepting, advance to applying the toothpaste to a tooth with a finger with lots of praise followed quickly by the walk or dinner or ride in the car and a high value treat. Have the pet associate the good time with the brushing procedure. Be enthusiastic.

Step 4: Introduce the Toothbrush

When your pet is comfortable with Step 3, place a "pea" size amount of paste on the brush, allow a lick and then, with the mouth closed, place the brush under the lip and brush one tooth for a second or two. Follow with lots of praise, a high value food treat and a walk, a ride or dinner. As your pet accepts this each day and likes it, due to praise, the taste and the reward (dinner, walk, ride) you can increase the number of teeth brushed.

Step 5: Develop a Routine...Followed by the Reward

Day by day, gradually increase the number of teeth brushed. It is especially important to brush the upper rear teeth. Proceed slowly and gently with lots of praise. Stop brushing perhaps before your pet begins to become impatient. Stopping because of the pet's behavior will teach the pet to object and then brushing will become harder and harder. Build up to about 5 or 10 seconds per side. Gently keep the mouth shut, and brush by feel, not by sight. If your pet is trying to lick and eat the brush, relax your grip on the closed muzzle and allow some "mouthing" as you accomplish your brushing. ALWAYS, follow this training stage with enthusiastic verbal praise, a high value treat and a reward (walk, dinner, ride, bedtime). The vast majority of pets will look forward to the brushing and it will become pleasant for both of you. Ten to twenty seconds a day of brushing the outer surfaces of the upper and lower teeth will greatly affect your pet's comfort, quality of life and longevity. Your pet does not have to develop the mouth odor from oral infection that lessens your relationship. Many pets will actually fetch their tooth brush. Gingivitis can cause liver, kidney or heart disease and even cancer over time. You can delay brushing the inside surfaces of the teeth as most pathology occurs on the outside surfaces.

Every pet deserves a comfortable mouth free from infection.

What is a High Value Treat?

Your pet's interest in training and cooperation are enhanced if giving treats or rewards that are especially tasty. Try cooking some skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut them in ½ inch cubes, freeze them in a zip lock and give two or three immediately after brushing with lots of praise during or after each training period. It works!



Puppy & Kitten Dental Problems – best if caught early

- Retained Deciduous (baby) Teeth** – If a permanent tooth comes in beside the baby tooth, then the baby tooth can gently “push” the permanent tooth out of alignment which can cause serious bite problems (malocclusion) and early periodontal disease. If you see the permanent and the baby tooth at the same time, please have this confirmed by a doctor, then corrected. This should be done promptly.
- Base Narrow Canine Teeth** - In some puppies, one or both of the lower two canine/fang baby teeth and or permanent teeth will be positioned abnormally toward the center of the mouth. When these teeth fully erupt, they often poke into the roof of the mouth and can be very painful and cause infection. Addressing this problem when your pet is as young as possible makes it easier to correct.
- Periodontal Disease** – Periodontal infection is the most common disease of dogs and cats in America – even more common than fleas. Eighty percent of dogs have periodontal disease by age 3 years. Gingivitis is often present by age 1 year and quickly progresses to periodontal disease which affects oral health, oral comfort and quality of life. Ideally, we never want tartar to form on your pet’s teeth SO PLEASE begin a home care program today before permanent changes begin. Instructions on how to brush teeth are on the back of this sheet.
- Missing Teeth** – A puppy may be born without one or more teeth, which is not a problem. However, sometimes a tooth is “hidden” below the gum line and is termed non-erupted. If a tooth is not visible by 8 months of age, the space should be x-rayed since non-erupted teeth can form a cyst that can painlessly harm the jaw or even cause jaw fracture unless corrected.
- Fractured Teeth** – Life long, avoid HARD TOYS or FOOD such a real bones or deer antlers or any very hard substance. Baby teeth and permanent teeth less than a year of age are weaker than adult teeth and very prone to fracture. Fractured teeth are ALWAYS uncomfortable and should be treated.
- Malocclusions** - Poorly aligned teeth are often a genetic problem starting at birth and may initially be subtle. The upper or lower jaw may be too long or short or one side of the mandible may be longer or shorter than the other. Many malocclusions require no intervention but others, require very early (6 to 8 wks of age) intervention...[such as dental interlock where the teeth can prevent the lower jaw from growing properly]. Veterinary orthodontics is never used for appearance. It is utilized with painful conditions so the pet can be comfortable and functional.
- Cleft Palate** – Congenital deformity is a fissure or opening in the roof of the mouth, best treated in young pets. Cleft palates can communicate into the nasal cavity and milk, water or food may come out nostrils.



There are other dental problems that puppies can develop. If you see something that you are unsure about, please have us examine your puppy.