

# BRUSHING TEETH: A HOME CARE GUIDE FOR PET OWNERS

The best time to brush a dog's teeth is after the evening meal when both you and your pet are relaxed. If your dog growls, bites, scratches, or shows any other signs of aggression during the procedure, **stop immediately** and consult your veterinarian for professional advice.



Gently position the dog in a corner (of a sofa, chair, or room) so that he will be secure and more easily handled. Carefully lift the dog's lips to expose his teeth.



Rub your finger over the dog's teeth and gums for a minute or so. This will get the dog used to having something in his mouth. It might be necessary to do this a couple of days before going on to the next step.



Put a small amount of toothpaste specially formulated for pets on your finger and allow the pet to taste it.



Slide a finger brush onto your index finger and put a small amount of toothpaste on the brush. Gently rub the brush over the dog's teeth and gums. If necessary, repeat this process in the next brushing session. Because finger brushes don't reach the gum line, they should be used for as short of a time as necessary.



Apply a small amount of toothpaste to a bristle brush. Place the brush bristles at a 45° angle to the gum line. Move the brush gently in circular patterns over the dog's teeth. Start by brushing a few teeth. As the brushing sessions continue, slowly include more teeth. Teeth should also be brushed in a back and forth motion. Build up to about 30 seconds on each side of the dog's mouth.



## For Cat Owners

These basic steps can also be used to brush a cat's teeth. However, remember that cats can be more sensitive to new things. Other recommendations:

- Take each step slowly and allow the cat to become familiar with what you are doing.
- When using a toothbrush, use the smallest size available.
- If the cat refuses to accept the toothbrush or finger brush, try using a piece of gauze wrapped around your finger with toothpaste on it.

## Tips for Success:

- Brush your dog's teeth at least two or three times per week.
- Concentrate on the outside of the teeth.
- Praise the dog frequently during the procedure.
- If your dog tolerates only a brief brushing, don't be discouraged. Getting some toothpaste onto the teeth and gums is better than not brushing at all.

