



HOW TO BRUSH YOUR DOG'S TEETH

Holding your dog

1. If your dog is cooperative have him/her sit and brush from the front.
2. If your dog is wiggly, you can hold your dog to your side with his/her back in a corner. If you have a helper you can have them hold the dog and approach the mouth from the front. (You can tuck a small dog under your arm and reach in front to brush.)



Get ready to brush

Squeeze a generous blob of toothpaste onto a plate or paper towel. Brushing your dog's teeth probably will use more toothpaste than you use for your teeth. Load the brush with toothpaste and use your thumb to push the toothpaste into the bristles so your dog can't lick it all off too quickly.

Brushing

3. Lift the lip and brush in circles
4. You do not have to open the mouth wide to brush the back. Slip the brush between the cheek and teeth and brush by feel.
5. Once your dog is comfortable with brushing, begin working on brushing the insides of the teeth. Open the mouth as little as possible to access the insides of the teeth. Be gentle when brushing the inside of the lower jaw as the tissues here can easily be injured. Don't forget to give your dog a treat and praise her/him when you're done!

Tips and tricks

- Work up to brushing the whole mouth slowly. Be patient. For resistant dogs, it may take 2-3 months before you can brush the whole mouth. Brush a little more every day. You may spend the first week just letting your dog lick the toothpaste off the toothbrush.
- Reward your dog after brushing with his/her favorite treat. If your dog doesn't like treats, use a short play session with his/her favorite toy as a reward.
- Don't be concerned if your dog chews the brush. Try to avoid letting him/her chew on the plastic but chewing the bristles actually helps brush the teeth.
- Brush your dog's teeth just after brushing your own teeth. Not only will this help you remember to brush your dog's teeth but many dogs will notice you brushing your teeth and ask for toothbrushing. You can't say no to that, can you?
- Use toothbrushing as a time to evaluate your dogs' oral health. Look for broken teeth, loose teeth or other problems. Notice if your dog suddenly doesn't want a particular area of his/her mouth brushed. Make an appointment with your regular veterinarian or Dr. Carle at the Animal Medical Center of Seattle if you notice anything concerning.
- Don't let perfection be the enemy of the good. You may not be brushing perfectly, but if you are making an effort every day, you are doing something to improve your dog's oral health.



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