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## How to Brush Dog Teeth Successfully

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### Tips for Brushing Your Dog's Teeth

Although humans and animals are different in many ways, dental hygiene is an important health practice we have in common. Like humans, a clean bill of health takes into account oral care and is a critical part of a person's—as well as a pet's—well-being. While a dog's natural anatomy and ancestral history certainly helps in making your pup less prone to cavities when compared to humans, dogs can still develop problems such as tartar, plaque buildup and gingivitis if not cared for properly. In between

## How to Have Healthy Dog Teeth

### 1 Pick the Right Tools

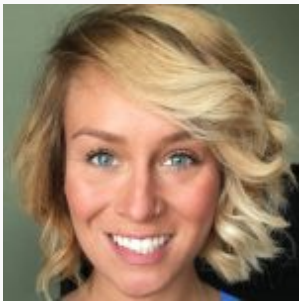
We've all heard the common saying that a dog's mouth is cleaner than a human's. But, that doesn't mean that your pooch shouldn't practice good dental hygiene. According to Dr. Sarah Wooten, DVM, consulting veterinarian for BigBarker.com and small-animal veterinarian of Greeley, CO, "Like people, without proper dental care, dogs and cats develop... plaque and tartar, [harboring] harmful bacteria that eats away at gingival tissue, causing gum recession, and ultimately, bone loss around the tooth. This condition is... also extremely hard on your pet's health, as bacteria from the mouth enters the bloodstream through the infected tissue and causes additional wear and tear on the internal organs." So, when preparing to brush your pet's teeth, be sure you have the right tools for the job to make the task simple, quick and easy for you and your pup. The [Vetoquinol Vet Solutions Enzadent Enzymatic Poultry-Flavored Toothbrush Kit for Dogs & Cats](#) is a great starter kit that contains both a traditional-style, dual-ended toothbrush as well as a handy finger brush, depending on your and your pet's personal preferences. The dual-ended, ergonomically correct toothbrush is effective in removing food debris and plaque while polishing each tooth surface, no matter its size. Plus, the enzymatic toothpaste, specifically developed for dogs and cats, is a non-foaming formula that can be safely swallowed, making brushing an easier task for even the pickiest of pets.

### 2 Get Up Close and Personal

Many pet owners know that new experiences—even positive ones—can be a challenge for timid animals. Because brushing may not be on the list of top fun activities for your dog, many owners tend to throw in the towel as soon as their pet puts up a fight. Remember that the unknown can be very scary to certain animals, and perhaps a longer and slower acclimation period is all that is needed to make your furry best friend comfortable with a new routine. "If your pet is shy, start by just letting [him] lick the toothpaste off your finger while you pet him, [but] make sure it is non-fluoride, animal toothpaste and not human toothpaste," says Wooten. "[Then,] gently rub a small amount of toothpaste on the teeth in front and, [using a circular motion, gently scrub each tooth]. You can gradually work your way to the back of the mouth and introduce a brush, but go slowly and make sure your pet is comfortable with the procedure." For starters, the [Nylabone Advanced Oral Care Dog Finger Brush](#) is a great option. This small tool can be less intimidating to your pup while allowing you to use your finger to maneuver the cracks and crevices of your pet's mouth. The soft rubber bristles are designed to reach even the hardest of areas where plaque and tartar build up. This handy brush can help make establishing a daily dental care routine simple, quick and easy.

Like with most training, starting early can make a big difference in your pet's comfort when it comes to getting used to a new regimen. "Most pets can be trained to accept a toothbrush within 1-3 weeks, and you don't have to brush every day," says Wooten. "Just make sure to brush every 72 hours at a minimum, because that is how long it takes for plaque to turn into tartar." For more eager and confident pups, the [Virbac C.E.T. Pet Toothbrush](#) is a helpful tool, specifically designed with dogs and cats in mind. Equipped with a small head and reverse angle to allow proper brushing in even the most hard-to-reach places, the toothbrush's soft bristles and perfect size ensure your pet's comfort while maintaining proper dental health and a gleaming smile.

When considering pet health and the frequency of brushing dog teeth in between veterinary dentistry visits, it's important to remember that our pups feel pain the same way humans do. In order to prevent physical suffering, disease and health complications down the road, brushing your dog's teeth is critical in maintaining good health. Remember, gum disease can be prevented in most pets, even though your pup may object to having his teeth brushed at first. To ensure fresh breath and clean teeth, as well as a happy and healthy dog, start early, and provide plenty of positive reinforcement and yummy treats to reward good behavior.



*Dominika is a Chicago native who graduated from DePaul University with a bachelor's degree in English. Having nearly a decade of combined experience in the fields of marketing, journalism, UX and social, she thrives in the fast-paced and ever-changing world of digital media. When she is not working, Dominika can be found at the beach, traveling the world or cuddling her female Rottie named Ezra.*

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