

Northern Oaks

Bird & Animal Hospital

How to Brush Your Pet's Teeth

A proper daily homecare routine is very important to maintain a clean and healthy oral cavity, thus a healthy pet. Here's how to perform a daily, effective toothbrushing regime:

1. Obtain a finger toothbrush from the pet store or a pet toothbrush. Purchase **PET ONLY** toothpaste as human toothpaste contains fluoride that is harmful if swallowed. Pet toothpaste can be purchased at a pet store or your veterinarian's office and comes in different pet appetizing flavors (chicken, malt, mint, etc.). Water can be used if you do not have toothpaste; as long as scrubbing action is involved when brushing, either is acceptable.
2. Allow the pet to lick the toothpaste off your finger before brushing the teeth to let your pet get accustomed to the flavor. Next, place your finger in your pet's mouth with the toothpaste on it and rub it over the gums so he/she gets used to having something in it's mouth.
3. When you feel like your pet is comfortable, apply a moderate amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush and begin to "scrub" your pet's teeth in the front of the mouth first. Scrubbing action is circular motion applied with a moderate amount of pressure.
4. Continue scrubbing the teeth along both sides of the mouth. You can use your fingers to slightly open the mouth when scrubbing the sides to separate the upper and lower teeth.
5. Brushing should take only 1-2 minutes and you should not be forceful about it. A bad experience one time may mean difficulty every time in the future.

There are several dentrifices you can use in conjunction with brushing to improve oral health including OraVet sealant, CET rawhides, CEt Aquadent rinse, and tartar control treats.