

Looking after your cat's teeth

HEALTHY SMILES
HAPPY PETS

Signs of dental disease:

- Bad breath
- Yellow and brown tartar deposits on the teeth - normal teeth should be white
- Difficulty eating
- A red line along the gum line (gingivitis)
- Bleeding gums



How to look after your cat's teeth:

Regular Check-ups

Preferably every 6 months, as you do with your dentist, but at least once a year.

Brushing

Most cat owners are terrified at the thought of brushing their pet's teeth, not to mention that this should be done daily. Brushing your cat's teeth may seem impossible at first, but with correct training and an understanding of how to do it, the process can, in some cases, become readily accepted by your pet and just takes a few minutes of your time.

Dental gel

This is an easy alternative if brushing is a problem, although is not as effective. Dental gels for cats contain enzymes that kill the germs that cause tartar build-up, tooth decay, gum disease and irritation. Most commonly, you have to apply the dental gel directly onto your cat's teeth daily.

Dental treats

These can be used on a regular basis to help scrub plaque off your cat's teeth to reduce the risk of tartar build-up. It is recommended to use these treats in conjunction with one of the above.

Chew toys

These are similar to dental treats in that they are abrasive and can help scrub off plaque and massage gums as the cat chews.

Specific dental diet

This is food that is specially designed to assist with your cat's dental health and although it is not able to eliminate tartar it can reduce the build-up.

Looking after your cat's teeth is not about picking one of the above, it is about an overall package that ensures the ongoing dental health of your pet.

How to train your cat to accept brushing:

It is possible, in some cases, to train a cat to accept teeth cleaning with time and patience. It is easier if introduced early in life. Ask your vet or veterinary nurse to show you how to brush correctly.

- ✓ Obtain a toothbrush designed for cats from your vet, one per cat to prevent disease transmission
- ✓ Obtain special pet toothpaste in flavours that your cat will find tasty. NEVER use human toothpaste
- ✓ Choose a routine time each day
- ✓ Start by putting the toothpaste on your finger and offering it to the cat to lick. Do this for a few days
- ✓ Have your cat's back to you when you start. They may try to reverse and it is less confrontational
- ✓ You may need someone to help hold them, but it is better to acclimatise them slowly by touching their mouth and offering rewards.
- ✓ Move on slowly, retracting the lips and touching the teeth with the toothbrush, then stop and reward them. Again, repeat this for a few days. Start with gentle brushing, building-up to cover all the teeth.

