



TRAINING AND ADJUSTING  
YOUR PET TO TOOTH  
BRUSHING

## Introduction to Oral Health Management

**Periodontal disease** affects around 80% of cats and dogs over 3 years old. It begins when plaque bacteria causes gum inflammation (gingivitis). This can spread to the ligaments and bone, leading to deep pockets. This creates loose painful teeth, which eventually require extraction.

Common signs include:

- Bad breath
- Bleeding or inflamed gums
- Loose or missing teeth
- Mouth sensitivity
- Eating changes
- Reluctance to play with toys

Prevention is key. Daily brushing is the best way to reduce this painful condition, just like in humans. Start slow and steady to help your pet get comfortable. Practice the first couple of steps a few times daily, and avoid rushing or causing stress.

### IN THIS GUIDE YOU WILL FIND:

Introduction to Oral Health Management

Step by Step Brushing guide

Signs of Stress or Discomfort

Product Recommendations

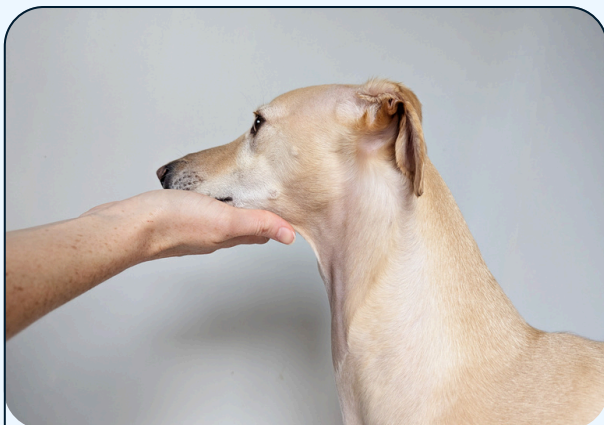
Alternative and Additional Care

Useful Training Links



# Step by Step guide to brushing

BEFORE STARTING, ENSURE YOUR DOG IS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE WITH MUZZLE-AREA TRAINING. IF NOT, CONSULT A BEHAVIORIST



## Step One - Building Trust

Start by gently rubbing and stroking around your pet's face. Get them used to you touching their lips and holding their face, starting with what they are comfortable with, working up to 30 seconds at a time.

Always reward with a tasty treat.

If your pet shows any signs of discomfort or stress, re-start where they were comfortable after a short break.



## Step Two - Desensitisation

Now lift the lip and gently rub the upper canine tooth with your fingertip. Once your pet is happy with this, slowly start working your way to the back teeth. It may take multiple sessions before your pet is comfortable with this.

Next, add a pet-safe toothpaste to your fingertip, and repeat the steps above. Never use human toothpaste as it contains fluoride.

- STEP 1 AND STEP 2 SHOULD IDEALLY BE PERFORMED A COUPLE OF TIMES A DAY, FOR A NUMBER OF WEEKS, UNTIL YOUR DOG IS ADJUSTED TO THE NEW ROUTINE
- CREATING A POSITIVE OR AT LEAST NEUTRAL EXPERIENCE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING AT THIS STAGE



# Step by Step guide to brushing continued

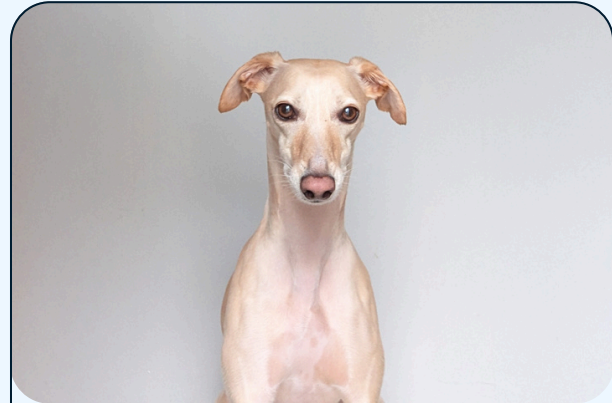
**PLAQUE BACTERIA CAN REGROW WITHIN 24 HOURS**



## Step Three - Introducing the tooth brush

When your pet is comfortable with you touching all their teeth, you can introduce the toothbrush. Put the toothpaste on the brush and gently brush the teeth and under the gums, making sure you pay equal attention to both sides of the mouth.

You can angle the brush so it brushes around the base of the tooth, clearing out the disease-causing bacteria that sit there.



## Step Four - Keep going!

When you first start brushing, it is not unusual to see a small amount of blood. This is due to inflammation of the gums and should settle with regular brushing. If you find it worsens or does not improve, or your pet appears in pain, please contact us or your regular vet.

- FINGER BRUSHES CAN HELP THE TRANSITION FROM STEP 2 TO STEP 3
- REGULAR BRUSHING SHOULD IDEALLY BE PERFORMED DAILY
- ANY LESS FREQUENT THAN ONCE EVERY 3 DAYS IS NOT GOING TO BE EFFECTIVE



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# Alternatives and Additions to Brushing



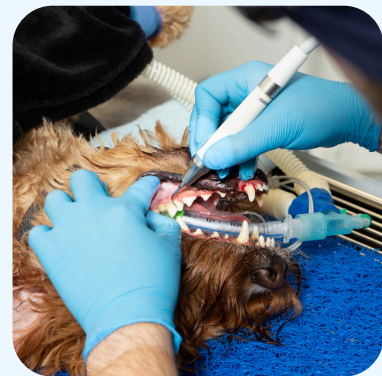
## Gel Products

Daily brushing is the best way to keep teeth clean, as with humans. However, some cats resist it. Gels with the antiseptic chlorhexidine can be a helpful and more tolerable option for cats



## Diets and Chews

Specialist dental diets and chews can help reduce plaque bacteria in the mouth, lowering the risk of gingivitis and periodontal disease. These work best with brushing, as chews alone are insufficient for long-term oral health.



## Cleaning under Anaesthetic

Sometimes we find that there is too much plaque and tartar for brushing alone to control, and a thorough oral exam and cleaning under a general anaesthetic by a veterinary dentist may be needed to get your pet in the right place to start brushing effectively.



## A Few Notes To Remember

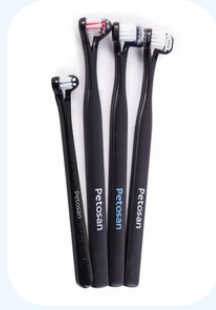
- Regular oral exams will help catch any issues before they worsen.
- Manual brushing is the best preventative care.
- A professional clean can set you up for success when dealing with existing plaque and tartar.
- Cooperative Care when brushing - stay calm, and build positive or neutral experiences.
- Any further questions or concerns please contact Jonathan on the details below.



# Product Recommendations

## BRUSHES

Petosan



Acessia  
BizziBrush



Small childs  
soft-bristle  
toothbrush



## TOOTHPASTES

PetDent  
Toothpaste



Petosan  
Toothpaste



## FOOD

Hills t/d



## GEL PRODUCTS

PetDent Gel



Dentihex



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# Cooperative Care and Training Resources

**Cooperative care** is a method of training which allows your pet control over a situation where their body is being handled/ touched/ inspected in ways they are not normally used to.

In situations that are not an emergency, the option to say “no” gives the animal control and consent over their care, reducing stress and anxiety.

Cooperative care for tooth brushing and oral examinations reduces stress and improves the likely hood of ongoing oral health management.

## USEFUL TRAINING RESOURCES:

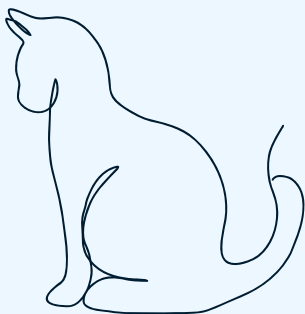


TEAM CCC has resources on training and breaks down the process in to smaller steps.

[HTTPS://COOPERATIVECARECERTIFICATE.COM/RULEBOOK/EXERCISE-1-6-MOUTH-TEETH/](https://cooperativecarecertificate.com/rulebook/exercise-1-6-mouth-teeth/)

Tails of Connection has some useful information and videos with a good overview of cooperative care.

[HTTPS://WWW.TAISOFCONNECTION.COM/TRENDINGBLOG/GETTING-STARTED-WITH-COOPERATIVE-CARE-IN-DOG-TRAINING](https://www.tailsofconnection.com/trendingblog/getting-started-with-cooperative-care-in-dog-training)



*Thank you for reading!*



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