



Animal Dental Care

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SMALL ANIMAL DENTISTRY: FIFTY KEY QUESTIONS

Module 8 Dental Home Care

46. What dental home care is recommended for dogs?

- dental home care is recommended for all dogs for treating and helping to prevent periodontal disease if possible
- the rule of 3 and 3 states that plaque formation begins as early as 3 hours after a complete dental prophylaxis, and calculus formation begins within 3 days
- plaque and calculus formation can begin even sooner than this
- the single most effective method of dental home care is toothbrushing, ideally done once daily using a veterinary toothpaste or gel
- this mechanically removes plaque from teeth above and below the gingival margin
- it is recommended to start training puppies by handling their mouths and gently rubbing their gingival margins with your fingers from as early as three months of age
- praise and treats are helpful during training, to make it a positive learning experience

- specially designed pet toothbrushes are available
- finger toothbrush designs generally have very thick rubber bristles that are too large to enter the sulcus, but they will help remove supragingival plaque
- children's toothbrushes with ultrasoft bristles are highly recommended

Specially designed iM3™ double-ended pet toothbrush (above), and John O. Butler Critters™ child's toothbrush with ultrasoft bristles (below).



An iM3™ finger toothbrush design with thick rubber bristles (left), and John O. Butler Critters™ child's toothbrush with fine ultrasoft bristles (right).

- most puppies like the poultry flavoured toothpastes, but some prefer other flavours such as beef and malt
- let a puppy lick a veterinary toothpaste from your finger
- introduce an ultrasoft bristle toothbrush to a puppy with some toothpaste in the bristles for the puppy to lick



As shown in most human toothpaste commercials, toothpaste is incorrectly applied on the top of the bristles. This usually falls off or is immediately licked off when going to brush the patient's teeth.

Toothpaste should be applied in the bristles of the toothbrush so that it does not fall off and cannot be licked off when starting to brush the patient's teeth.



- the preferred toothbrushing method is the Bass or sulcular brushing technique
- gently hold over the puppy's muzzle with your free hand, and raise the puppy's upper lip on one side