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ORAL HOME HEALTH CARE

**** The most important step in keeping your pet's mouth healthy is brushing their teeth at home. There is no product on the market that takes the place of daily brushing. The following notes are meant to be used in combination with at home teeth brushing and annual/bi-annual professional dental cleanings by your veterinarian.**

1. What kind of toothbrush/toothpaste do I use for my pet?

-Your pet cannot use human toothpaste (due to some ingredients that he/she cannot swallow because of the risk of upset stomach, vomiting, etc). There are many pet-approved types of toothpaste, including CET® brand products.

-You can use a pediatric soft toothbrush, or your veterinarian can recommend a pet-specific toothbrush.

2. How do I brush my pet's teeth?

The key to getting your pet to accept tooth brushing is to Go Slow! Pick a time when he/she is quiet and responsive. Start by having your pet lick the toothpaste off of your finger. Reward them with their favorite snack or toy. The next step (can be done the next day, or the next week, depending on how quickly your pet accepts the first step) is to have them lick the toothpaste off of the toothbrush. After this, introduce the toothbrush into their mouth. Then, do one stroke at a time until they are accepting a complete oral cleaning. The entire process of learning to accept tooth brushing should take about a month, but may take longer in some pets. Be sure to reward your pet every time. This should be a fun process for both you and your pet and should be done daily.

3. Are there foods that can help my pet's teeth?

Yes! The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) has a list of them on their website www.vohc.org. These foods have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing some plaque and calculus formation.

Some examples:

1. Hill's Science Diet t/d ® and Oral Care®
2. Iams/Eukanuba® have many foods with "Dental Defense"
3. Purina also makes a dental-friendly diet