

Dental Care for Cats

Cat Dental Care: Keeping Your Cat's Teeth Healthy

Regular dental care is essential for your cat's overall health. Poor dental hygiene can lead to plaque buildup, which can cause infections and make eating painful, impacting your cat's appetite and well-being.



Signs of Plaque Buildup

Look out for these signs that may indicate your cat has plaque buildup:

- Unpleasant smell from their mouth
- Red or inflamed gums
- Grey-brown coating on teeth resembling kettle scale



How to Brush Your Cat's Teeth

1. Initial Assessment

Before brushing, examine your cat's mouth. If you see plaque or red gums, consult your vet for treatment options before attempting to brush.

2. **Getting Started with Toothpaste**

- Use toothpaste specifically designed for cats; never use human toothpaste, as it contains harmful fluoride.
- Introduce the toothpaste by placing a small amount on your cat's nose or lips, allowing them to lick it off for a few days to get accustomed to the taste.

3. **Find a Comfortable Position**

- Place your cat on a stable surface at a comfortable height.
- Face your cat away from you, using your body to prevent them from backing away.
- Use your forearms to gently restrain them and keep them calm.

4. **Practice Lip Movement**

Before brushing, practice moving your cat's lips to get them used to the sensation.

5. **Reward Your Cat**

After each session, reward your cat with a tasty treat, reinforcing the positive experience.

6. **Brushing with a Cotton Bud**

- Start with a cotton bud and a small amount of cat toothpaste.
- Brush gently using a circular motion on their teeth, focusing on the back teeth first.
- Gradually increase the time spent brushing until you can clean all teeth.

7. **Transition to a Toothbrush**

Once your cat is comfortable with the cotton bud, switch to a small pet toothbrush. Brush gently for about a minute on each side of the mouth, paying attention to the gum line.

Additional Dental Care Options

If brushing proves difficult, consider these alternatives:

- **Dental Gels, Powders, and Mouthwash**

These products can help reduce plaque buildup. Consult your vet for suitable options.

- **Special Diet**

Some cat foods are designed to support dental health. Ask your vet for recommendations based on available studies.

- **Dental Chews**

Chewy treats can help clean your cat's teeth, but avoid overly hard chews to prevent tooth damage. Always consult your vet for the best options.

Consequences of Poor Dental Care

Neglecting dental hygiene can lead to several issues, including:

- Gum infections
- Receding gums
- Loose teeth
- Bad breath
- Tooth loss

In severe cases, your cat may need a professional dental cleaning under anaesthesia to remove hardened plaque.

Conclusion

Maintaining your cat's dental health is crucial for their overall well-being. Regular brushing, along with proper veterinary care, can help prevent dental diseases and ensure a healthy, happy life for your feline friend. Always monitor your cat's mouth for any signs of dental issues, and consult your vet if you notice any problems.

