



DENTAL DISEASE PREVENTION



'Sheldon' Redhall

■ Preventing dental disease at home

The reason we talk to our clients about dental health a lot is because it is preventable, and it has a massive impact on our pets' lives.

Humans are advised to brush our teeth every day, to remove plaque and stop it from causing problems.

That's also the best thing you can do for your pets – if there was anything better for keeping the teeth and gums healthy, we'd all be doing it, pets and owners alike!

■ Here's a guide to help you to start brushing your pet's teeth at home!

Many dogs and cats will allow tooth brushing happily. Some can even grow to enjoy it – after all, attention is attention! It just needs a bit of patience to begin.

- First get them used to having their face and mouth handled.
- You can then progress to putting your finger in their mouth with a bit of toothpaste, obviously making sure you have bought species-specific toothpaste – never use any designed for humans.
- Next you can move on to a species-specific toothbrush. Try to brush each tooth, front and back. Once a day is the best you can do, but any amount of brushing is better than none!

The process can take a while, and should come alongside lots of treats and positive affirmation. If you try to skip steps and jump straight to putting a toothbrush in your pet's mouth, you may create negative connotations and never get near them with the brush again!

Brushing isn't an option for all pets, but there are other options that can help.



'Moose' Morrison

The key thing is to try to remove plaque before it turns to tartar. Dental diets are designed with this in mind, with the size and structure of the kibble forcing a pet to chew more, and hence causing more friction with the teeth.

Dental chews can help, although this depends more on the pet than the product – the chewing is the important factor, so if they're gobbled down it's not much use! Bones and antlers don't provide much benefit and can lead to tooth fractures.

You can purchase additives for water and other supplements which help to keep plaque softer for longer – but this is only an aid to the other measures we have mentioned above, as the plaque still needs to be removed.

You can find more information on how to keep your pet's teeth healthy at home on our website.



■ Worried about your pet's teeth? Join our **Pet Health Club** and get unlimited free vet visits!

We do things differently, and have been for over 125 years. We're the world's largest employee-owned vet group – something we're very proud of. Our **Pet Health Club** works differently, too.

We offer our members unlimited consults with our vets and nurses throughout the year as standard. We love our patients, and we believe in giving them the right care, in the right way and at the right time. We feel that the best way to do this is to empower you to bring them in to see us, or chat to us via a video consult, whenever you have a concern about their wellbeing.

That means if your pet is having problems with their dental health, you can bring them in to see us with no charge, and our lovely team will be happy to help you to work out what the problem is, and how best to solve it.

Sign up via our website, or speak to us in your local branch for more information.

