

A guide to brushing your dog's teeth

Brushing your dog's teeth regularly is a great way to keep his gums and teeth healthier and fight gum disease. Introducing tooth brushing gradually will mean he will learn to enjoy the experience.

What you will need;

- A tooth brush with medium bristles and the correct size
 - Medium and large dogs – adult (people) size
 - Small dogs – child's size brush
 - Toy or miniature dogs – small special pet tooth brush
- Pet Toothpaste (do not use human tooth paste)
- A quiet place without distractions
- A little time and patience



Some important tips before you get started:

- Keep each session short – from a few seconds to a maximum of a couple of minutes
- Pick a time which suits your daily routine and try to keep it as your usual time to brush. It doesn't matter when in the day you do the brushing.
- Repeat each stage daily until your dog is comfortable with it and then for a few more days beyond. Then you can move on to the next stage. You may do the established stage first and then continue into the new stage when introducing a new stage.
- Every dog is different – so train at a pace which suits your dog. You can always go back a stage.
- Give lots of praise and a reward but only for good behaviour.

Take care when putting your fingers into your dog's mouth. We don't recommend doing so if your dog is likely to bite or become aggressive.



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A step by step guide

STAGE 1

Introducing the pet toothpaste

- Smear a small amount of toothpaste on your finger tip.
- Allow your dog to lick the toothpaste. He should like the taste and be keen to eat it.



STAGE 2

Getting used to something in his mouth

- Place some toothpaste on your finger tip.
- With your other hand gently hold his muzzle to keep the mouth mostly closed.
- Insert your finger under the top lip on the side of the face.
- Rub your finger tip on the teeth.
- Don't allow the mouth to open or you may get your finger chewed.
- Slide your finger further back inside the cheeks (**Do not do this if there is any risk that you could be bitten**). *If your dog won't sit still when you hold his muzzle, you should seek some behavioural advice.*



STAGE 3

Introducing the toothbrush – canine teeth to begin with

- Wet the toothbrush with water and add some toothpaste then push it down into the bristles.
- Hold his muzzle to keep the mouth gently closed. This is to stop chewing when the brush is introduced.
- Lift the top lip on one side of the mouth (with a finger tip or thumb of the hand holding the muzzle).



- Gently brush the canine teeth – these are the longest teeth.
- Change your hold on the muzzle to lift the lip on the other side, then brush the canine teeth on this side. **Tip; Do not start with the incisor teeth at the front of the mouth as this is a more sensitive area of the mouth.**

STAGE 4

Brushing the teeth further back

- After brushing the canine teeth, continue on to brush the teeth further back in the mouth.
- To get to the molar teeth you will need to slip the brush past the corner of the lips inside the cheeks. **Tip; Try a smaller brush if you struggle to get inside the cheek.**
- Brush the upper teeth first and then allow the mouth to open slightly to be able to brush just along the gum line of the lower teeth.
- Remember; Increase the brushing gradually and stop if your dog is reacting more than a little bit.



STAGE 5

Brushing all the teeth

- Brush the canine and back teeth on both sides (as before).
- Now lift the top lip at the front of the mouth (still holding the mouth closed) and brush the incisors.
- You are now brushing the outside of all the teeth. You may want to brush for a little longer to do a more thorough cleaning.
- For the best results brushing should be at least once a day.

