

# Dental care for your pet

## Frequently asked questions

### Wild animals don't have dental work or tooth brushing, why does mine need it?

Plaque and tartar builds up on your pet's teeth just like ours. Stray animals develop tartar exactly the same—tartar builds up, cavities and tooth root infections develop. The tooth eventually breaks or falls out, with the animal experiencing a lot of pain.

Animals have the same nerves as we do in our mouths—so if something hurts us, it will hurt our cats and dogs too. *Our aim is to prevent our pets experiencing dental pain.*



### Why does my pet need another dental scale and polish?

A scale and polish procedure removes all of the plaque and tartar at the time the dental procedure is performed.

It will **not** prevent new plaque and tartar building up. We rely upon homecare to slow the tartar build up to extend the interval between scale and polish, thereby saving you money and reducing the number of anaesthetics your pet has during its lifetime.

## What kind of home care is available?

### THE TOOTHBRUSH AND PASTE KIT:

Just as with your own teeth, **nothing beats brushing!**



### Tips:

- Start by beginning to touch your pets mouth when they are very relaxed. Lift up their lips to reveal their teeth
- Brush with a soft toothbrush for short periods at first, then increasing the time until the outside surfaces of all teeth are covered
- Many animals love the flavor of pet toothpaste—allow them to lick it off to make the process more enjoyable
- Concentrate mostly on the gumline
- Keep all sessions relaxed and end on a positive note!

**DO NOT USE HUMAN TOOTHPASTE ON YOUR PET.** The fluoride in toothpaste for people is not designed to be swallowed. Pet toothpaste comes in malt and poultry flavours and is safe.

### THERAPEUTIC DIET:

Realising the difficulties involved in home dental care, therapeutic diets have been created to help remove plaque and tartar from the teeth. If brushing is not possible, this may be a viable option for you.



### DENTAL TREATS:

Some cats and dogs will not allow anyone to reach into their mouths for any reason and will not tolerate brushing, or any other home care. For these animals dental treats, such as VeggieDents or Greenies, represent an alternative method of home dental care. We recommend a treat daily for routine home care.

These diets use **mechanical** and **chemical** action to gently rub the teeth during chewing whilst chemicals in the food reduce plaque build up.



## DO'S AND DON'TS OF HOME DENTAL CARE:

- **Do** make dental care part of your pet's daily routine.
- **Do** take your pet to the vet for regular dental checks
- **Do** get your pet used to daily brushing, preferably from a young age
- **Do** reward your pet after brushing with a treat, a groom or a walk!
- **Do** take your pet to a vet to have its teeth scaled as soon as recommended. The longer you leave it, the more quickly the disease develops towards the irreversible stages, such as tooth loss.
- **Don't** perform home dental care for the first 2 weeks after a dental procedure at the veterinary clinic—your pet may have tender gums
- **Don't** start home care if your veterinarian has advised you that your pet's teeth/mouth is sore.
- **Don't** let your dog chew on cow hoof or real bones. These are so hard they may break your pet's teeth!
- **Don't** think bad breath is normal!
- **Don't** consider home dental care as an alternative to a full dental cleaning if we have advised that your pet has more advanced dental disease



### Effects of periodontal disease

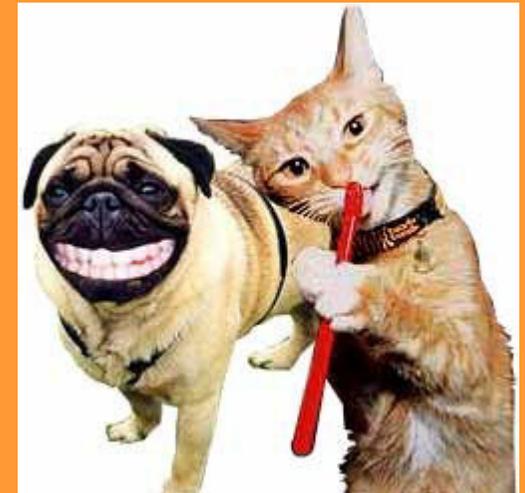
- Foul smelling breath
- Excess salivation
- Difficulty feeding and grooming
- Tooth root abscesses
- Secondary infection of other organs eg heart, lungs, kidneys
- Teeth breaking and falling out



246 Great South Road,  
Greenlane,  
Auckland  
Phone: (09) 524 6415  
Fax: (09) 529 0286  
Email: [pets@greenlanevets.co.nz](mailto:pets@greenlanevets.co.nz)  
Website: [www.greenlanevets.co.nz](http://www.greenlanevets.co.nz)



## Dental Homecare



**Preventative dental home care for fresh breath and a healthy mouth**