



Dental Home Care

My pet just had a dental cleaning! Now what?

Periodontal disease is the most common medical condition seen by veterinarians and is preventable! Periodontal disease is the term used to describe inflammation or infection surrounding the tooth and occurs when plaque and tartar accumulate on the surface of the tooth and below the gum line. When left untreated, periodontal disease progresses, causing damage throughout the pet's body, including to important organs such as the heart, kidneys, and liver. During your pet's dental procedure, plaque and tartar were removed from these areas, reducing the progression of dental disease. Now it is up to you to prevent or reduce the plaque and tartar in your pet's mouth.

Brushing of the teeth with a pet toothpaste is the single most effective method of removing plaque before it becomes tartar, the hard, mineralized build up that can only be removed during a dental cleaning. Plaque hardens into tartar within 24 hours. Because of this, for toothbrushing to be effective it must be done daily and with patience and diligence. Some tips on how to make toothbrushing a successful experience can be found [here](#). If this is not possible there are a variety of products on the market to aid in home dental care. Not all of these products are safe or effective so the Veterinary Oral Health Council was created to help pet owners determine the best products for their pets. The VOHC have placed their seal on approved products and also have a comprehensive list on their [website](#). Below are some of our recommendations that we carry in clinic.

CET Enzymatic Toothpaste: In addition to manually removing plaque during brushing, the enzymes in this toothpaste help freshen breath and reduce the bacteria that contribute to plaque and tartar buildup. This comes in a variety of flavors. For dogs with food allergies, Vanilla Mint contains no animal protein or grains.

Trisident Water Additive: When diluted in your pet's drinking water, this helps reduce plaque buildup and freshen breath. Mix a fresh bowl daily according to the dilution directions on the bottle. Provide additional fresh water if your pet finishes the bowl before the next day.

Clenz-A-Dent Plaque Off Food Additive: A seaweed extract that helps freshen breath and makes tartar less likely to stick to the teeth. Simply use the measuring spoon provided to sprinkle on your pet's food once daily.

CET Hextra Chews (dogs): A rawhide chew coated with chlorhexidine to reduce bacteria that contribute to plaque. The abrasive action provided by chewing the rawhide helps remove plaque buildup. CET chews are lower in calories than many other dental chews and bones.

Greenies Cat Treats: Greenies have been clinically shown to reduce plaque and tartar buildup in cats. They are a low calorie treat to help prevent weight gain. To be most effective, 10-15 treats per day should be fed. Greenies come in several flavors.

Healthy Advantage Oral+ Food: Hill's Healthy Advantage pet food line has been developed to incorporate components of some of the most commonly used prescription diets to help prevent disease. The Oral+ version has been proven to reduce plaque and tartar buildup when fed regularly. Oral+ also supports healthy digestion, healthy skin & haircoat, weight control and optimal urinary tract health (cats) or joint health (dogs).

Hill's Prescription Diet T/D: T/D has been clinically shown to reduce plaque & tartar buildup. The kibble is larger than most foods to encourage chewing. It has a special fiber matrix to prevent it from crumbling when chewed. This helps to clean the surface of the tooth while your pet eats. Can be fed as the total diet, or several kibbles can be given daily as a treat.

Samples of these products were sent home with you when your pet was discharged after their dental procedure. Try them out and see what works best for your pet's preferences and needs. The rate at which plaque hardens is much quicker in some pets than others so often it is most effective to use a combination of products. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or need the full size of any of the samples.

