

# You Want Me To Brush My Pet's Teeth????

## *Why should I brush my pet's teeth??*

Whether your pet has clean shiny teeth or already has some plaque and tartar, brushing your pet's teeth does have some great benefits for both you and your pet.

- A clean healthy mouth can add 2-4 years to your pet's life.
- The bacteria that is present in plaque, tartar and gingivitis can spread through your pet's body causing problems or aggravating existing problems.
- A clean mouth has less halitosis (bad breath)...good for your pet...great for you.
- Mouth pain (because of bad teeth) is probably the most poorly recognized type of pain we see in our pets. There are many animals that have chronic pain because of dental problems that **do not show obvious signs of this pain**. They eat, play and act normally but are experiencing discomfort...they just don't show it, or they assume that the pain is normal.

## *How To Get Started???*

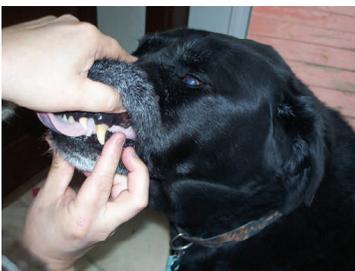
**Take your time...At each step go slow, reward your pet with treats and praise when they do well. Do not try more until your pet is comfortable with what you're doing. If your pet is becoming upset or aggressive then stop. As beneficial as brushing is...it's not worth getting bit. Not all animals will let you brush their teeth.**

**TRY TO BRUSH YOUR PET'S TEETH 1-3 TIMES A WEEK**

**(BRUSHING 3 TIMES WEEKLY DECREASES TARTAR FORMATION BY 90%, BRUSHING ONCE WEEKLY DECREASES BY 50-60%)**

### *Step 1*

- Carefully place your finger in your pet's mouth between the teeth and lips. If your pet seems okay with this, gently rub the outer surface of the teeth and gums, mimicking brushing the teeth. Do not worry about getting the inside of the teeth. Almost all of the plaque and tartar in your pet's mouth is on the outside surfaces. Also, it's more important to get the upper teeth versus the lower teeth. Do both if possible, but concentrate on the upper.



### *Step 2*

- Next take a swatch of cotton cloth (an old clean tee-shirt or clean rag) and place over your finger.
- Repeat the process you did in step one.
- Initially use just the dry cloth, later you can wet it and dip the end in baking soda (to clean the teeth better). If your pet is reluctant about this, instead of baking soda start by dipping the cloth end in some beef/chicken broth or gravy.
- If this is going well, you can switch to a dog/cat toothpaste. (Human toothpastes do not work well for animals...the mints and other flavorings can cause vomiting.



### *Step 3*

- Once this is going well, you can switch to a toothbrush.
- You can buy a dog or cat toothbrush, however a soft bristled child's toothbrush works just fine.
- Again, just do the outside surfaces of the teeth...if you can do the inside surfaces, that's fine but it's not as important at the outside surfaces. Also remember that the upper teeth are more important to clean than the lower.

