



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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## *The Importance of Dental Care*

### *Importance*

The importance of proper tooth care cannot be emphasized enough. It is not just a problem with bad breath. It can be a serious health problem.

Bacteria from the mouth easily get into the blood stream from inflamed gums and then can spread all over the body. The heart and kidneys are often the organs infected by the spreading bacteria. If your pet's immune system is not as good as it should be, the infections can become serious. Pets with dental problems don't feel well and will eventually lose teeth if the problem is not corrected.

### *Home Care*

The best thing you can do is brush your pet's teeth. Daily brushing is best, but even every 2-3 days will help. A special food (t/d) can also help to keep the teeth clean. It can be fed as the main diet or used as treats. For dogs, chewing on bones will keep the tarter down.

When you first try to brush your pet's teeth, start with something like a Q-tip to get him used to something in his mouth. You can then build up to a toothbrush. Also use a pet toothpaste that is flavored. The younger your pet is when you start this, the easier it will be. But even older pets can get used to the process.

### *Professional Cleaning*

All pets will need their teeth cleaned by us on a regular basis. Some will need to start when they are just 2-3 years old. If gingivitis or tarter is present, it is definitely time to do it. Gingivitis shows up as puffy red gums along the edge of the tooth, and tarter is a brownish buildup on the tooth.

We need to sedate your pet in order to clean the teeth properly, but the anesthetics used are quite safe. We recommend running blood tests before to check that the liver and kidneys are functioning normally.

The cleaning process is similar to what a dentist does, the teeth are scaled and polished. It is important to clean under the gum line to do an adequate job. Frequent cleaning will help to keep infections down and keep the teeth healthy and strong.