



Brushing your Pet's Teeth

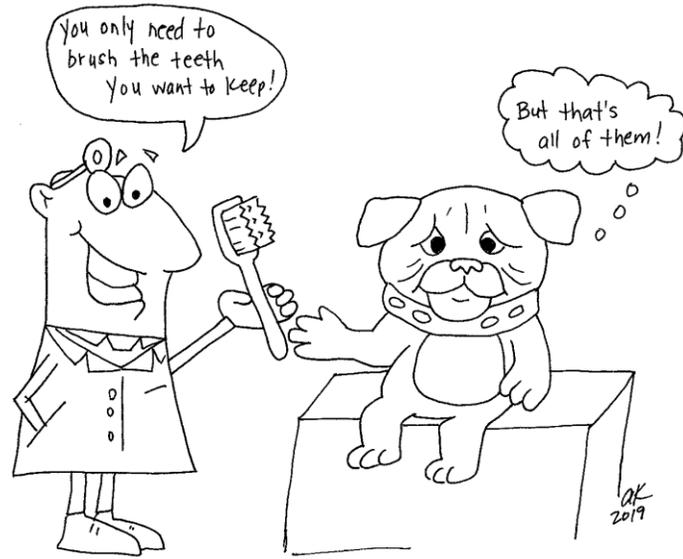
Dental care is an important part of daily grooming for pets too!

Brush Type

A small soft bristle toothbrush will be the best tool for the job as the bristles can get underneath the gum by up to 3mm to remove plaque and debris. Finger brushes with small plastic nubs or small cloths are good if your pet does not do well with the brush but unfortunately, they will do less at the gum line.

Toothpaste

Pet toothpaste can help with plaque removal. It is often flavored with interesting flavors like beef, chicken, peanut butter or seafood! Pet toothpaste will not foam or froth and is completely edible (unlike our human versions). Many types of pet toothpastes have the added benefit of enzymes to help break down plaque and small amounts of tartar.



Technique

When first starting brushing the teeth can take some getting used to for both you and your pet. Make sure to reward your pet so they see it as a more pleasant experience and maybe eventually they will even look forward to having it done. Holding the toothbrush in a fist with your index finger over the back of the bristles will make for the most dexterity, allowing you to feel where you are brushing as well as how far back the teeth really are. Moisten the tooth brush and toothpaste with a small amount of water. Lift the lip up with one hand and gently brush (too hard can damage the gums) with the other. Brush in circular motions or up and down along the outer surface of all the teeth. As plaque can build up in under 24 hours brushing daily will help keep healthy teeth and gums (see photo below).

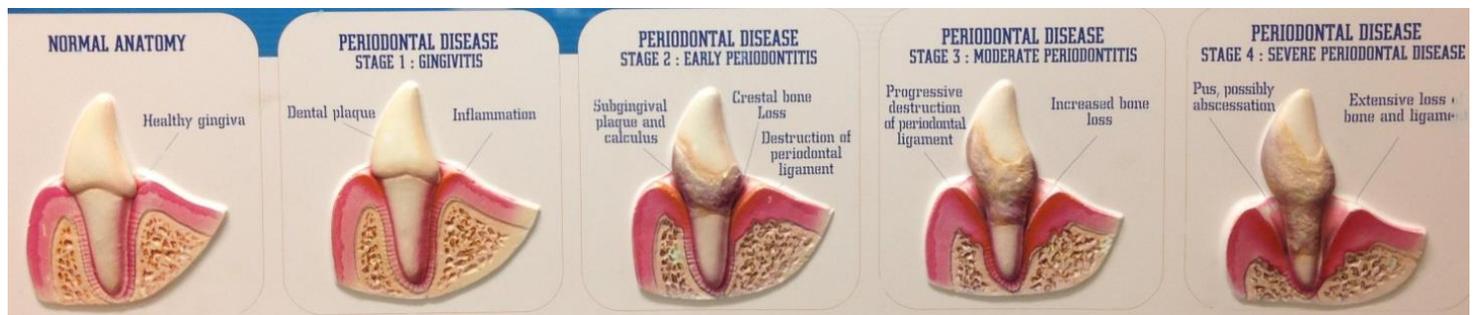


Figure: Stages of periodontal disease. Notice how the tartar starts to progress down the root of the tooth causing gum detachment and bone loss.