



Healing Paws Veterinary Care Dentistry Services

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BRUSHING KITTY'S TEETH

Your goal: better oral health = longer lives and less pain. The goal is to brush all of the outside surfaces of your kitty's teeth once a day, using a soft-bristled toothbrush (or cloth) and veterinary toothpaste. Proper brushing for cats should only take 2-3 minutes a time and should be done once a day.

Patience: It may take several weeks for your kitty to become comfortable with you brushing their teeth. It is important to be consistent with your routine and to keep this a positive experience for you and kitty.

Select the time of day: Cats love routine and routine makes things easier to remember. Be consistent with tooth brushing time each day and choose a quiet time when your kitty is usually hungry but not overactive.

Choose The Reward: Choose your kitty's favorite reward - a play session, brushing, a favorite treat. We want your kitty to associate tooth brushing with their favorite thing. If you can choose something other than treats, please do so (you don't eat a Snickers bar right after brushing your teeth!)

Surroundings: Choose a place your cat feels settled and safe. Your bed, a large chair, your lap on the bathroom floor. Keep a calm, gentle voice and breathe - you've got this and so do they! Remember to have reasonable expectations about how fast you will progress, but be persistent.

Supplies: Start gentle with a soft baby wash cloth or cotton gauze on your finger, some cats with small mouths even prefer a q-tip at first, curious cats like to chew on toddler tiny soft toothbrushes, only use veterinary enzymatic toothpaste - do not use human toothpaste and make sure that the product is enzymatic as that breaks down plaque



Approach: Do not approach your kitty face on. It is always best to have him on your lap or between your legs with his butt towards you and head facing away. Cats don't like things coming straight on to their face so if you approach the face and mouth from the back and sides it is much more acceptable in cat language!

Mouth Handling: Begin by gently handling the mouth, starting with affectionate touches and treats before lifting the lip. Slowly advance from moving their lips with your fingers to running your fingers along the teeth and gums. Once your kitty is comfortable with your fingers, try to put a moist, soft gauze sponge around your finger and move it along their teeth. It will likely take several sessions to work up to this point. Give rewards throughout and end the session right away if your kitty resists. Try again tomorrow with a calm and patient attitude.



Toothpaste: Your goal is to use a circular motion to apply the toothpaste to the gumline along the outside all of the teeth -

this is trickiest in the back and the bottom. You do not need to put toothpaste on the inside of teeth! However, please be patient, do not introduce toothpaste onto the gauze or brush until your kitty is comfortable with the gauze or brush without paste. At that time, put just a tiny (less than a pea amount) of paste on the brush or gauze and let your kitty lick it off. Once that goes well, it is time to use a circular motion to gently lift the lips and introduce the toothpaste in the mouth. Introduction comes first, then when that goes well you can go to the actual application of toothpaste along the gumline.



Stay patient and positive: It is often best not to introduce more than one new step a day. You want each day to end on a good note so that you and kitty both enjoy this. You'll be surprised how well this goes and you'll help them live a longer, more comfortable life due to better oral health!