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## Dental Disease Prevention

To be effective, tooth brushing should be done once or twice daily for a minute or two. Finally after brushing, do something fun with your pet so that he or she will associate the experience with something positive.

### Getting Started:

For the first few sessions do not use a brush at all. Hold your pet as if you are cuddling. Gently stroke the cheeks with your finger. Progress over time to a wash cloth or gauze dipped in chicken broth or tuna juice to wipe the gums and teeth. Once you've mastered this process you are ready to move on to an actual brush. Hold the brush as a 45 degree angle to the the gum, and apply just a dab of pet toothpaste. Begin to brush the teeth and gumline in an oval motion, concentrating on small sections at a time. Ideally, you should build up to about 30 seconds on each side of the mouth. Most tartar develops on the outer surfaces of the rear teeth, so special attention should be given to these areas.

Try to make tooth care as pleasurable as possible for all concerned. Proceed slowly and gently, and use a calm, soothing voice. Stop each session while it is still fun and lavish your furry friend with praise afterward. Pretty soon he/she will begin to look forward to oral hygiene.

Taking just two minutes a day to care for your pets teeth can give them a lifetime of health benefits. Routine home care significantly reduces tooth loss, dental disease, bad breath, and potential life threatening heart and kidney disease.