

Wilmette Pet Center

"the place for people who love pets"

February is National Pet Dental Care Month, and we thought it'd be a perfect topic in our caring for older pets. And since dental health is so closely tied with overall health, this is info that's good for all ages!



Few of us think about our cat's or dog's dental health until our vet recommends a deep cleaning. We notice our guy's bad breath, but think it's normal. Bad breath is usually a sign that something more serious is going on. Plaque and tarter build-up are just a serious issue for our cat or dog as it is for us.

Jan Bellows DVM, of Hometown Animal Hospital and Dental Clinic in Weston, Florida, states: "The toxins from periodontal disease are absorbed into the dog's blood stream. As the kidneys, liver, and brain filter the blood, small infections occur causing permanent and at times fatal organ damage. After periodontal disease is treated, and the owners give proper home care, most dogs respond wonderfully due to the decreased pain and infection." (*)

Deep cleanings at the vet can be stressful on your pet, can be expensive, and do carry some risk. Prevention is always so much better than treating problems later. And we have a lot of options for keeping your dog's teeth at their healthiest at home:

Dental treats are a great way to improve your pet's teeth in a way they love!



[Crumps Naturals](#) - pure sweet potato and liver-coated potato chews are perfect for scraping teeth clean. The vitamin A and chlorophyll really help keep their breath fresh, too.

From the classic [Greenies](#) to Ark Natural's Breath-less toothpaste treats and [Whimzies](#) potato and rice based dental treats, they all help reduce plaque, tartar, and bad breath.

Looking for something more natural for your dog?

Raw bones by [Dag Bones](#) - Raw bones are an excellent way for a pet to keep their teeth clean; they also provide a lot of mental stimulation and help relieve stress. For more info, check out myths on raw bones.

For serious care, use our pet dental lines:

[TropiClean](#) dental system - a wide range of products make it easy to maintain your pet's teeth without brushing.

Nylabone has a lot of solutions for dental care. From the [Dental Chew](#) to their line of [toothpaste and brushes](#), it's a fantastic way to improve your pet's oral health



Brushing your pet's teeth is a lot easier than more people think. The key is to build up to it slowly and gradually by taking small steps. Let them first sniff and taste the toothpaste. Dip a finger into beef bouillon (for dogs) or tuna water (for cats) and gently rub along your pet's gums and teeth. Focus on is the gum line (the crevice where the gums meet the teeth), where bacteria and food mix to form plaque. Start at the front of the mouth, then move to the back upper and lower teeth and gum areas. Once your pet is okay with a little bit of touching, gradually introduce gauze over your finger and rub the teeth and gums in a circular fashion. After a week or two, once they are used to this, introduce an appropriate dog or cat sized toothbrush. Flavored toothpastes can help make it more enjoyable for your pet.

Don't forget to constantly praise them and reward them with a small treat once you're done!

Routine professional dental care is also vital; make sure you're taking your pet to the vet on a regular basis. Using some of these products can drastically help reduce the need for deep cleanings and help prevent problems in between visits.