

Wilmette Pet Center

"the place for people who love pets"

February is National Pet Dental Care Month! Did you know that 70% of cats and 80% of dogs by age three have some form of dental disease? Poor oral hygiene affects their overall health, their kidney, lung, and heart functions, just like it does with us.



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 tartar build-up are just as serious an 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 any procedure involving anesthesia carries 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 are pure dehydrated sweet potato and liver-coated sweet potato chews, perfect for scraping teeth clean. The vitamin A and chlorophyll really help keep their breath fresh, and dogs love the taste.



Merrick Fresh Kisses are an innovative, natural dental treat designed not only to clean dog's teeth, but to truly freshen breath at the same time. Merrick Fresh Kisses feature a double-brush design to clean teeth by removing plaque and tartar as the treat is chewed. Made with all-natural ingredients specially formulated to freshen breath, they are also the only dental treats to be both grain-free and potato-free, and like all Merrick treats, Fresh Kisses are

safely cooked in the USA with no ingredients from China.

Missing Link Once Daily dental treats - Veterinarian formulated, Missing Link Once Daily™ packs the nutritional power of the ORIGINAL® superfood supplement into a fun to feed dental chew for dogs. The Missing Link Once Daily™ provides the missing whole food nutrition your fur kid needs in a convenient, teeth-cleaning doggy dental chew. Say hello to fresher breath! With The Missing Link's® healthy dog treats, dental care for dogs has never



been easier. And don't let the name mislead you. Not only will your pup get the missing whole food daily nutrition they need, but thanks to chewing the cool ridges, your pup will be on his way to reducing plaque and tartar. Available in Hips, Joints, & Teeth and Skin & Coat formulas.

Looking for something more natural for your dog?

Raw bones by Tuckers - 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. Cooked bones can splinter (unless done in a pressure cooker), so always feed raw, and go for bones that are too big to for them to swallow easily (generally look for bones that are the size of your pet's head, or larger than twice the size of their mouth). Cats can be fed chicken necks and wings. When giving your pet bones, supervision is a must. For more info, check out our article [Truth About Raw Bones](#), and always talk to your vet if you're concerned about using raw bones.

For regular care, use our top dental lines:



TropiClean dental system - a wide range of products, from water additive to tooth gels, make it easy to maintain your pet's teeth without brushing. TropiClean oral health products are made with natural ingredients for a healthy mouth and fresh breath.

Nylabone has a lot of solutions for dental care. From the dental chews to their line of toothpaste and brushes, it's a fantastic way to improve your pet's oral health. Their natural toothpaste helps reduce plaque and tartar buildup, and is formulated with Denta-C, which is scientifically formulated to reduce plaque that harbors bacteria.

ProDen PlaqueOff offers a food additive, treats, and bones for both cats and dogs, made with North Atlantic alga *Ascophyllum nodosum* to prevent dental plaque from sticking to the teeth and soften already existing tartar deposits.



Brushing

Brushing your cat or dog's teeth is by far the most effective way to prevent dental problems, remove tartar, and freshen breath. 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.