

## A Pet Owner's Guide to Pet Pearly Whites

You may have noticed that your pet's breath is starting to smell a bit stronger recently. Or maybe your veterinarian recently diagnosed your pet with dental disease. As humans, brushing our teeth twice a day is a ritual that is engrained in our minds since we were young, and it's become a habit that we don't even question. Believe it or not, our pets' teeth need the same level of care as our own.



Whether you have a new pup whose adult teeth have just come in, or you have a senior cat who just had a dental cleaning, staying on top of daily and weekly oral hygiene is paramount to their dental health. Here are a few tips:

### Daily brushing

Daily brushing is the gold standard for keeping your pet's teeth looking their best. This will require patience on your part, and willingness on your pet's part. NEVER use human toothpaste for your pet. At House Paws, we recommend **CET toothpaste**, which comes in several delicious flavors. For toothbrush options, choose a soft-bristled child's brush or consider a **finger brush** (a tiny rubber brush that attaches to your finger). You can even wrap a gauze square around your fingertip (although this takes a bit more trust that your furry friend will not bite you!). You can obtain toothpaste and either of the brush options from our office or our online store. Visit our website ([www.housepawsmn.com](http://www.housepawsmn.com)) for more tips on brushing your pet's teeth: go to the "How-To" tab under "Resources."

### Dental wipes

Similar to brushing, this is best done daily and does require you to work closely within your pet's mouth. We carry **MaxiGuard Oral Cleansing Wipes**, which contain an enzyme that keeps biofilm from forming on the tooth. Biofilm is produced by bacteria, and turns to plaque, which then becomes tartar.

### Dental food

**Royal Canin Dental Diet** is a great way to help keep tartar at bay just by feeding your pet. It comes in both dog and cat varieties and has been specially formulated so that the kibble "scrubs" the tooth as your pet chews. This food can be fed as an exclusive diet or, although not as effective, can be used as treats. You can find this either from our online store or by calling the House Paws office.

### Dental chews and treats

There are many chews and treats out on the market that claim to clean your pet's teeth. When choosing a dental treat, keep in mind that these will not clean the canines or incisors (fangs and nibblers), as these teeth are not used for chewing. For this reason, we recommend including other practices like tooth brushing in your pet's hygiene routine. Also consider that not all dental treats are created equal. When in doubt, go with a veterinarian-approved product. Some treats

can even fracture teeth, which creates a whole new dental issue! As a general rule, if you bounce the bone or treat on your knee and it hurts, it is too hard.

Here are a few dental treats that we recommend:

**Greenies**— Greenies are a very good choice to help prevent plaque from accumulating on your pet's chewing teeth. These can be purchased through our online store.

**CET chews**— CET Chews come in many varieties for you to choose from. We are a fan of the CET VeggieDent Flex chews, which also contain ingredients to promote joint health! You can find the CET chews in our online store, or you can order them through our office.

**OraVet chews**— Ora-Vet Chews are another option for you to try. These have a spongier texture, which some pets love. You can find these on the online store.

Just remember when adding in something to your pet's diet that you account for those extra calories! You may be surprised at how quickly treats can add up....

## Real Bones

It is a common misconception that giving your pet a bone can help keep their teeth strong. We do not recommend giving bones, especially those that have been cooked or smoked, because they can easily chip or fracture your pet's teeth. Bones can also splinter and create a choking hazard or cause gastrointestinal lacerations. Raw bones do not splinter like cooked and smoked bones do, but they do carry the risk of bacterial contamination.

## Water additives

Adding an approved product to your furry family member's water bowl can help to "rinse" the mouth with beneficial enzymes every time they take a sip! There are a few different brands that we recommend:

**CET Aquadent** — Aquadent is a flavorless liquid that helps to control plaque build-up and keep your pet's breath fresh. You can order Aquadent through our office.

**Teef Protectin42** — Teef is a prebiotic powder formula that is more expensive than Aquadent but actually targets bacteria growth below the gumline. It also strengthens teeth and prevents plaque build-up.

## Oral gel/sprays

These products are a wonderful daily option for those pets who cannot (or will not!) tolerate daily brushing. House Paws recommends **Maxi/Guard OraZn Gel**, which contain that same enzyme that keeps biofilm from forming on the tooth. The nice thing about the gel is that you can apply it without actually sticking a finger in your pets mouth. It is best used daily.



If you have any questions regarding the products that we recommend and carry, please do not hesitate to reach out to us in the office at House Paws!