



# BETTER TEETH WITHOUT BRUSHING

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Dental disease is the most common health problem for both dogs and cats, leading to foul breath, infected gums and eventual loss of teeth. Left unchecked, oral infections can even travel to other regions of the

body. Removing plaque and tartar from tooth surfaces is the best form of prevention.

While daily brushing is a good practice, brushing an animal's teeth is not an easy habit to establish, and sooner or later most pet parents will be faced with the considerable costs and risks of professional cleaning under anesthesia.



Brushing helps Basil's teeth stay clean

There are other options, however, that are easy to implement and can make professional cleanings a less frequent event or even a thing of the past.

## THE ROLE OF DIET IN DENTAL HEALTH

In the wild there is no tooth decay. Only humans and their domesticated pets sharing a similar diet of cooked starches form dental plaque, the sticky biofilm made up of harmful bacteria that break down tooth enamel and attack gum tissue. Dry pet food doesn't scrape teeth clean any more than pretzels clean our teeth. In fact, oral bacteria like to feed on the starchy residue kibble leaves behind. Raw food and high meat diets, on the other hand, create a less hospitable environment in the mouth for bacteria to grow, with a different pH and very few sugars or starches. When the diet is switched, results are noticeable.

## CHEWING PLAQUE AWAY

Chewing is a great way to keep teeth healthy and clean. Our favorite chews, hands down, are raw bones. Called "Nature's toothbrushes", they scrub plaque away, and most dogs absolutely love them.

The saliva produced by chewing bathes the oral cavity with anti-bacterial enzymes. Marrow bones, knuckle bones, kneecaps and meaty poultry parts all make excellent chews. Knuckles provide the most flossing from the tendons and ligaments. Cats will sometimes go for poultry neck pieces. If your dog is new to raw bones, supervise his chewing and only give for 20 minutes at a time until you feel comfortable that he is chewing it appropriately. Giving raw bones as little as twice a week can make a difference, but daily chewing is preferred. The added benefit of happier canine is a big plus.

## MORE WAYS TO KEEP TEETH HEALTHY

Many dental products can be added to food or applied directly to teeth, and work well for cats and small dogs who may not be avid chewers. Minerals in kelps and seaweeds have been found to interfere with oral bacteria and their ability to stick to teeth. Tiny servings of



Raw bones are Dori's favorite dental treat

**Plaque Off** or **SeaDent** mixed with food inhibit plaque formation. **Wysong DentaTreat** looks and tastes like Parmesan, with dental-active cheese enzymes, probiotics and minerals that gradually dissolve plaque and even remineralize tooth enamel. **Ark Naturals Plaque Zapper** is a powder that goes in the water bowl and prevents bacteria from proliferating with a patented enzyme delivery system.

Regular use of **PetzLife oral spray** and gels kill harmful bacteria, even below the gum line, by means of grapefruit seed extract and other natural ingredients. The salmon-flavored gel, with 10% salmon oil, is especially good for cats—wipe a pea-sized serving on a paw, and your cat will lick it off. **Ark Naturals**

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# DENTAL HEALTH AND YOUR PET CONTINUED

**Brushless Toothpaste** dental chews have several plaque-inhibiting substances and breath fresheners and come in four sizes for different sized animals.

## ANESTHESIA-FREE TEETH CLEANING

Anesthesia-free teeth cleaning may be the perfect option for animals in need of routine cleanings to remove tartar but who do not have serious dental issues such as infected gums or teeth needing extraction. It's also a good alternative for animals with more advanced dental disease who are not candidates for anesthesia due to age or poor health.

Scott Blanchard from Canine Dental Service provides monthly anesthesia-free cleanings at All The Best Pet Care store locations. Cleanings are thorough

and gentle and take about 20 minutes. Beforehand, a licensed veterinarian does a brief wellness exam to determine if more extensive oral care is needed. If so, the service will not be performed and the patient will be referred to his own or another vet for treatment.

Only hand-friendly dogs who aren't aggressive or overly fearful are good prospects for this service. Cats may be accepted for treatment if they are not excessively shy and are under four years of age, or if they've had a professional cleaning within the past

two years. For more information, or for appointment dates, please visit [allthebestpetcare.com/dental-cleaning](http://allthebestpetcare.com/dental-cleaning).

While it's never too late to intervene in your fur kid's dental health, prevention is far easier than cure. Because dental disease can shorten a



*Barkley loves to keep his teeth by chewing*

dog or cat's life by an average of two years, proactive dental care will give you and your companions more happy time together. Whether you use one of these approaches or all of them, they can help you avoid unnecessary dental expenses and save your pet from unnecessary suffering and pain.



Our highly trained pet care specialists can help you find natural options to improve your pet's health and well-being. Stop in for tips, suggestions and sound advice.



*The Best Food, Treats & Toys for Dogs and Cats*  
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