

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR DOG'S DENTAL HYGIENE

BEYOND BRUSHING

Tooth brushing is the gold standard for maintaining your dog's dental health, but what if your dog won't tolerate it, or you want to do even more to keep their mouth healthy? Good news: there are several evidence-based ways to help manage plaque, calculus, and gingivitis at home.

A recent veterinary study found that several home care tools can meaningfully reduce dental deposits and support gum health when used consistently. Here are the options that performed best:

1. TOOTHBRUSHING






MOST EFFECTIVE!





Brushing remains the number one way to remove plaque – even brushing every-other-day significantly reduced plaque and calculus buildup in the study.

TIPS:

-  Use a soft dog toothbrush (a soft-bristle child toothbrush is also fine to use)
-  Choose dog-safe toothpaste
-  Introduce gradually with treats and praise (initially use your finger, then finger brush, then a soft bristle small toothbrush)



PRODUCTS TO CONSIDER:

-  Virbac CET Enzymatic Toothpaste
-  Logic Oral Hygiene Gel



2. DENTAL CHEWS

Daily mechanical chewing helps scrub plaque from teeth. In the study, daily dental chews performed as well as every-other-day brushing, making them a strong alternative for dogs who dislike brushing.

TIPS:

-  Choose a suitable size for your dog
-  Be careful about increased calorie intake and weight gain if using a daily chew (adjust diet as required)

PRODUCTS TO CONSIDER:

-  Virbac VeggieDent FR3SH
-  Purina Pro Plan Dental Chewz



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3. WATER ADDITIVES

Water additives alone had limited effect in the study. However, when paired with brushing or chewing, they significantly improved gingival health. This suggests they work best as a supportive tool rather than a standalone option.

PRODUCTS TO CONSIDER:

- Virbac Aquadent FR3SH
- TropiClean Fresh Breath Water Additive



4. DENTAL DIETS

Dental diets use specialised kibble shaping and texture to reduce plaque

PRODUCTS TO CONSIDER:

- Hill's Prescription Diet t/d
- Royal Canin Dental

When choosing chews, dental diets, water additives or toothpastes/gels, look for the VOHC seal of approval. [Accepted Products Veterinary Oral Health Council](#)

AVOID

- Absolutely avoid bones, antlers and yak chews – tooth fracture risk
- The general guide is you should be able to indent the surface of a chew/toy with your thumbnail, or be able to snap it when you bend it with two hands. If you cannot do this, it is too hard for your dog's teeth and risks fracturing the teeth.

References:

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5. ORAL GELS + RINSES

For dogs who dislike brushing, antibacterial oral gels can help reduce plaque bacteria when used alongside chews or a dental diet.

PRODUCTS TO CONSIDER:

- Healthy Mouth oral gel (available from the USA)
- Logic Oral Hygiene Gel

A COMBINED APPROACH WORKS BEST

Regular mechanical cleaning (through brushing or chewing) is the best option for our pets, and chemical methods like water additives are most effective when used alongside these. Homecare can significantly help maintain oral health, but if your dog already has visible tartar on the teeth, bad breath, or sore/red gums, it cannot replace a professional dental cleaning.

Anaesthesia-free dental cleanings (including groomer "dentals," hand-scaling on awake dogs, or ultrasonic cleaning without anaesthesia) are not recommended, as they cannot clean under the gumline where disease starts, and may even cause harm by creating scratches on the surface of the teeth or giving a false sense of security because the teeth look 'clean'.

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