

# DENTAL HOME CARE

## Animal Dental Specialists of Nevada

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Dogs and cats get plaque and tartar on their teeth just like we do! Plaque is made of proteins (from saliva) and bacteria. If the plaque is not removed regularly, minerals from the saliva will start to accumulate on the teeth. This hard material is called calculus (commonly called tartar). Gingivitis, or inflammation of the gums, results from the body reacting to the presence of bacteria in the trough where the tooth meets the gum tissue. Ultimately the inflammation of the gums can spread to the bone around the teeth and cause progressive periodontal disease and bone loss. However, gingivitis is a reversible problem and periodontal disease is preventable. Once tartar has built up, your pet will need a professional dental cleaning and evaluation by your veterinarian.

After a pet's professional dental cleaning, plaque begins forming in as little as a few hours and hard, calcified tartar can start to form in as little as a few days. An effective home dental care program can help to slow the rate of development of plaque and tartar, prolong the time until your pet needs another dental cleaning, and keep the teeth healthier so that there will be fewer "bad" teeth, less inflammation, and a healthier pet than for a pet without home dental care.

## TOOTH BRUSHING:

The most effective form of home dental home care is tooth brushing. We recommend CET toothpaste, which has antibacterial enzymes and has a flavoring that most pets like. CET toothpaste and tooth brushes are available at our office that are specially designed for your pet's mouth. We can provide you with instructions on how to brush your pet's teeth. With gentleness, patience and perseverance it *is* possible to regularly clean many pets' teeth in this way. The best time to get your pet used to tooth brushing is when he/she is young. You can start by gently touching and massaging the gums with your finger, when he/she is in a calm, quiet mood. You can introduce the toothpaste by placing a small amount on the brush and letting your pet lick it off. Pet toothpaste is safe to be swallowed. After your pet accepts this, you can start gently brushing the teeth. Tooth brushing is most effective if done every 1-2 days. Please remember not to use toothpaste made for humans, because these products often contain ingredients that should not be swallowed.

**CET Toothpaste is made for both dogs and cats, in different flavors.**

More information at: [C.E.T.® Enzymatic Toothpastes \(virbac.com\)](http://C.E.T.® Enzymatic Toothpastes (virbac.com))

## DENTAL CHEWS:

In addition to brushing, or as an alternative (if the pet will not accept brushing), a range of chews such as OraVet chews, CET Veggident chews, or Greenies Veterinary Treats can help your pet's dental health. Chews help by providing some cleaning via abrasion on the surface of the teeth, promote saliva production which helps to reduce bacteria, and often contain products that help to control bacteria and plaque.

Some specific products are:

### **OraVet Dental Hygiene Chews:**

OraVet chews help to maintain healthy teeth by 2 separate effects. These treats have a chewy texture that teeth sink into, resulting in mechanical removal of plaque. They also contain a product (Delmopinol) that coats the teeth and reduces the ability for bacteria and plaque to adhere to the tooth surface.

**OraVet chews are for dogs**

More information at: [ORAVET® Dental Hygiene Chews for Dogs — Serious Oral Care Made Simple](http://ORAVET® Dental Hygiene Chews for Dogs — Serious Oral Care Made Simple)

### **CET VeggieDent Chews:**

CET VeggieDent chews are digestible vegetable-based chews that provide mechanical disruption of plaque & tartar, have ingredients that help freshen breath, and contain a prebiotic for gut health.

#### **CET VeggieDent chews are for dogs**

More information at: [C.E.T.® VEGGIEDENT® Fr3sh | Tartar Control Chews for Dogs | Virbac](#)

### **Greenies:**

These chews are highly palatable and help to mechanically clean teeth and help bad breath. Many years ago, the formulation of Greenies was less soluble, and some dogs developed intestinal blockage with this product. Those rumors still exist. However, at that time, Greenies chews were re-formulated and made more soluble, Greenies are safe and effective dental chews.

#### **Greenies dental chews are made for both dogs and cats**

More information at: [GREENIES™ | Dental Chews, Pill Pockets, Treats & More for Dogs & Cats](#)

### **Other brands of chews for both dogs and cats:**

Other brands of effective dental chews that are made for both dogs and cats include:

**Plaque Off:** <https://us.swedencare.com/plaqueoff/softchews>

**Tartar Shield Chews:** <https://www.tartarshield.com>

## **RINSES, GELS, SPRAYS, AND WIPES:**

Oral health rinses, gels, sprays, and wipes can be applied to the teeth and mouth to improve oral health. These concentrated products help to improve oral health, but do not have the advantage of abrasive cleaning of the teeth. Wipes have some mechanical cleaning ability, but are not as effective as brushing or chews. Some available products are:

**Vetradent Spray & wipes:** Contains Biotrate. Helps to reduce bacteria, plaque and tartar. Vetradent also makes chews and a drinking water additive.

#### **Vetradent is for dogs and cats.**

More information at: <http://www.vetradent.com/?page=products&lang=en&country=US>

### **Maxi/Guard and OraZn Gel, spray, & wipes:**

Maxi/Guard contains zinc, vitamin C, and an amino acid. These components help with antibacterial action and gum tissue health. This product may be used as a preventative and to help with healing after some oral surgery or periodontal procedures.

OraZn is similar to Maxi/Guard, but without the vitamin C component. Some pets, especially cats, may find the vitamin C distasteful, and accept OraZn better than Maxi/Guard.

#### **Maxi/Guard and OraZn are for dogs and cats.**

More information at: [MAXI/GUARD® Oral Cleansing Gel – Addison Biological Laboratory Inc \(addisonlabs.com\)](#)

### **Clenz-A-Dent:**

Clenz-A-Dent oral rinse contains an antiseptic ingredient, chlorhexidine, which is effective against bacteria that are in the mouth. This product may be used as a preventative or may be prescribed after certain oral procedures. Clenz-A Dent also makes a food additive powder and a dental chew

#### **Clenz-A Dent rinse and food additive is for dogs and cats.**

#### **Clenz-A Dent dental chews are for dogs.**

More information at: <http://www.clenz-a-dent.com>

## **WATER ADDITIVES:**

There are several water additives that are available to help increase dental health. These are products designed for ease of use. The purpose is to reduce plaque or calculus formation in the mouth. Drinking water additives have no mechanical cleaning associated with them and are less effective than toothpaste, chews,

and wipes. However, these products are not harmful, and require minimal effort from the owner, so they are easy to use for pets that will not accept other forms of dental care. Some of the additives create a slight flavor change in the water. When using a drinking water additive, it is best to start by adding less than the recommended amount to your pet's water. By starting with a small amount, and then slowly working up to the recommended amount, most pets will accept these products readily.

**Drinking water additives are made for both dogs and cats.**

Some products include:

Vetradent: See information under "sprays" above

CET Aquadent

## **DENTAL DIETS:**

There are a number of different pet foods that can help reduce the accumulation of tartar and plaque. These diets include both prescription diets and over the counter "oral care" diets. One particularly effective diet is the prescription diet from Hill's called Prescription Diet t/d. Other dental diets include Hill's Science Diet Oral Care, Eukanuba Diets that contain their "dental defense" system, and dental care diets from Royal Canin. Please ask your veterinarian for further details regarding available dental products for your pet.

**Dental diets are available for both dogs and cats**

## **FOOD ADDITIVES:**

There are various food additives, such as the kelp-based product, "Plaque Off," which are added to the food and can help reduce plaque formation. Like drinking water additives, these are safe, and are easy to use, but have no mechanical cleaning associated with them.

**Plaque-Off is for dogs and cats.**

More information at: <https://us.swedencare.com/product/proden-p...>

## **ESTERIFIED FATTY ACIDS:**

1-TDC is a product that contains esterified fatty acid complex. This type of product is an omega 3 fatty acid product that is different from typical fish oil supplements. It is a fatty acid product that is absorbed directly through the gum tissue. It is used both for periodontal disease and for arthritis and joint disease. This product was tested and proven beneficial in humans, and the research was published in the human Journal of Periodontology\*. It has now become available for cats and dogs. This product is particularly beneficial for pets with periodontal disease, due to its anti-inflammatory action.

**1-TDC is for dogs and cats.**

More information at: <https://www.workssowell.com>

## ***How do I know that a dental home care product is effective?***

The best approach is to use products recommended by your veterinarian. In addition, there is an independent group of veterinary dental specialists that evaluate the efficacy claims made by manufacturers of dental products. This group is called the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC). You can look for special marking on the packaging of any dental product that it has the seal of approval by the VOHC (see below). There are many dental products out there that have not been submitted to the VOHC for approval, and these products may or may not be as effective as they claim to be. However, if a product has the VOHC seal, you can be confident that it works as the manufacturer claims.

You can also review a list of VOHC approved products at their website: [www.vohc.org](http://www.vohc.org)



## ***Can I use human toothpaste or oral rinses?***

Human toothpaste or rinses should not be used in pets. These products are generally not meant to be swallowed. Additionally, many types of human toothpaste and other dental products contain sodium, fluoride, or other chemical ingredients which may cause problems in some pets. In fact, there are some over the counter human products, such as Biotene, that have the same brand name as certain pet products yet are still not safe to use on pets. If you have a question about a specific product, please feel free to ask your veterinarian about it.

## ***What toys should I avoid in order to protect my pet's teeth from damage?***

Chewing on objects harder than teeth may lead to broken teeth. This includes things such as real bones (cooked or uncooked), hard plastic/nylon chew bones, cow and horse hooves, and antlers or horns from animals. These hard chew toys commonly cause fractures of the large upper chewing teeth. The other hard objects that can break teeth include unintended chew toys such as rocks, fences, or other metal objects. Broken teeth are painful, cause chronic inflammation, and may result in a tooth abscess. Broken teeth with pulp exposure or disease of the pulp result in the need for either root canal therapy or extraction of the affected tooth.

## ***When should I start home dental care with my pet?***

As soon as puppy or kitten teeth emerge, it's time to start brushing. Although baby teeth are eventually lost and replaced by adult teeth, the puppy or kitten gets used to the brushing procedure, which continues for life. It is more difficult and time consuming to get adult animals to accept brushing, although it is still possible and beneficial for pets of any age to start brushing the teeth.

## **PRODUCTS AVAILABLE AT OUR OFFICE:**

### **Toothpaste:**

- CET toothpaste for dogs
- CET toothpaste for cats
- CET introductory kit (contains toothpaste, tooth brush, and finger brush)
- CET Double-ended tooth brush
- CET tooth brush for cats

### **Chews:**

- OraVet chews for dogs

### **Gels, rinses:**

- Maxi/Guard gel for dogs and cats
- OraZn gel for dogs and cats
- Vetrudent spray for dogs and cats
- Clenz-A-Dent rinse for dogs and cats

### **Water additive:**

- Vetrudent drinking water additive for dogs and cats

### **Esterified fatty acid:**

- 1-TDC for dogs and cats

## MY RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Routine home dental care:

- Brushing with CET toothpaste daily or every other day.
- Dental chews as a healthy treat. These can be given daily, if desired
- Hill's Prescription diet t/d for adult to mature animals that are not on another medically necessary diet.
- Vetradent water additive and/or Plaque-off food additive

### Animals with periodontal disease could also consider using:

- 1-TDC Periodontal esterified fatty acid
- Maxiguard gel

Additional information and handouts can be found online at the web sites of:

The American Veterinary Dental College - [Animal Owner Resources – AVDC.org](http://www.avdc.org)

Veterinary Partner web site - <http://www.veterinarypartner.com>

Veterinary Oral Health Council – <http://www.vohc.org>

Hill's Prescription Diet t/d information: <http://www.hillspet.com/products/pd-canine-td-canine-dental-health-dry.html>

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