

DENTAL HOME HEALTH CARE

Home oral hygiene can make a tremendous difference in your pet's comfort and health. Anything you can do to help prevent plaque and tartar accumulation will pay big dividends for your pet's overall health. What really matters is whether or not home oral hygiene will be provided over the long haul – considerable effort applied only for a short period or only occasionally will be of no long-term benefit. These product recommendations below are approved by the Veterinary Oral Health Council. They recognize products that meet pre-set standards of plaque and calculus (tartar) retardation in dogs and cats. Products are awarded the VOHC Seal of Acceptance following review of data from trials conducted according to VOHC protocols. http://vohc.org/all_accepted_products.html

Tooth brushing. Brushing your dog or cat's teeth is the single most effective means to maintain oral health between professional dental examinations. This makes sense because the bacterial film known as "plaque" is the cause of periodontal disease. This biofilm is easily disrupted by the simple mechanical effect of brushing the teeth. Frequent (ideally daily) brushing is recommended to maintain optimal dental health.

Plaque and tartar accumulate very rapidly on scaled and polished clean teeth when pet owners don't practice follow-up oral hygiene. The gold standard to prevent the accumulation of plaque and tartar is daily tooth brushing. Toothpastes with calcium peroxide (Calprox) dissolve the pellicle layer to decrease the accumulation of plaque. PetSmile toothpaste (Supersmile) is the only dentifrice accepted by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC).

Recommendation: PetSmile Toothpaste (Supersmile) with calcium peroxide (Calprox) is the only VOHC-accepted toothpaste. Website: www.petsmileusa.com

Diet. Hard food alone does not prevent plaque or calculus accumulation. Several complete and balanced adult pet dental support foods are available. For example, Prescription Diet t/d (Hill's Pet Nutrition) has a kibble that is designed with a transverse, fibrous striated matrix structure. When chewed, the product fractures along the transverse striations and the animal's tooth is retained in the kibble, increasing the abrasive contact with the fractured layers. The teeth are abraded and mechanically cleaned by the surfaces of the fractured layers as the product is chewed. Unfortunately, those areas that the mechanical diets do not touch are not benefited.

Recommendation: Hill's Prescription Diet T/D (Canine and Feline) Website: www.hillspet.com/dog-food/pd-td-canine-dry

<https://www.hillspet.com/cat-food/pd-td-feline-dry>

Soluble dental chews. Some dental chews remove plaque or tartar mechanically (e.g. C.E.T. VeggieDent chew—Virbac). Again, those areas that the chews do not physically touch are not benefited. **Addition of polyphosphates (sodium hexametaphosphate, sodium tripolyphosphate):** These sequestrants bind salivary calcium, making it unavailable for incorporation into the plaque biofilm to form tartar and decreasing the buildup of rough tartar to help prevent additional plaque

Recommendations: **VeggieDent Chews** are highly palatable, vegetable-based chews that are free of animal protein and wheat gluten, (for pets with food sensitivities). Website: www.dental.virbac.com/us/cet-veggiedent-fr3sh-dental-dog-chew

Tartar Shield Soft Rawhide Chews. Tartar Shield Soft Rawhide Chews contain a patented formula clinically proven to clean teeth, reduce bacteria, freshen breath, and prevent plaque and tartar build-up by more than 50%. Tartar Shield Chews for cats are also available. **Website:** <https://tartarshield.com/product/tartar-shield-soft-rawhide-chews>.
<https://tartarshield.com/about-us/>

Water additives. Developed to be added to a dog or cat's water source, these products can result in a significant reduction in the accumulation of plaque.

Recommendation: **HealthyMouth™ anti-plaque water additive.** **Active natural ingredients;** Papain: from papaya, Yucca, Cinnamon, Pomegranate, Blueberry, Clove, Chlorophyll, Vitamin C, Vitamin B2, Zinc gluconate: Website: <https://www.healthymouth.com>. VOHC accepted for plaque.

Natural Remedies. ProDen PlaqueOff® Powder, ProDen PlaqueOff® Dental Bites. A completely natural product, made from specially selected Norwegian Seaweed (D1070), *Ascophyllum nodosum*, harvested along the North Atlantic coast. **Free** from additives and artificial preservatives and contains **no gluten or added sugar**. ProDen PlaqueOff® Powder has been found to have specific beneficial effects for oral care, reducing bad breath by up to 63% after 12 weeks and reduces plaque by up to 35% after the first 8 weeks. Available for both dogs and cats. Do not use in pets on thyroid medication or thyroid diets. **Website:** www.plaqueoff.com/proden-plaqueoff-powder. VOHC accepted for both plaque and tartar.

PRECAUTIONS

Treats, kibble, soluble dental chews and rawhide chews have been implicated in choking injuries and deaths in dogs. It is essential that you offer only the weight-appropriate product and to observe your pets during chewing. Chews and rawhide products should not be fed to dogs that gulp, not only because of the choking risk but also because if the chew barely stays in the mouth, its positive dental effect is lost. We do not recommend the use of, pig ears, antlers, and other animal parts.

In order to reduce the risk of choking, pet caregivers should adhere to these safety tips:

- **All pets should be observed when chewing on a treat.**
- **Those dogs that gulp rather than chew should not be fed rawhide chews or large treats.**
- **Pet caregivers should be instructed on how to remove lodged treats from their pets' mouths or throats.**
- **Pet caregivers should carefully read warning labels on chews and dental devices before giving them to their dogs or cats.**

Gastrointestinal inflammation. Those products that claim control of plaque through chemical means must also be safe for the dog or cat to ingest. Excessive protein, preservatives and ingredients such as grain alcohol and xylitol may cause injury to a dog or cat.

Safety against tooth fracture. Chews that are rigid can lead to fractures of the carnassial teeth. **Deer antlers, bones, nylon products, dried yak milk, pizzle sticks, cow hooves, pig's ears and hard plastic toys claim mechanical plaque and calculus advantages, but unfortunately, they are so hard that chewing can result in tooth fracture with pulp exposure.** Clients should be cautioned against feeding bones, nylon toys or any product that does not easily bend, compress or dissolve when placed in a fluid environment. This is especially important for dogs that hold the treats with their paws while chewing on the side teeth. See this handout for more information: https://www.aaha.org/globalassets/02-guidelines/dental/dentalguidelines_chewtoy_final.pdf

Further Dental Home Health Care

For further home health care please visit:

<http://allpetsdental.com/veterinary-dental-specialist/pet-resources-home-dental-care.php>

For cats: <https://catfriendly.com/cat-care-at-home/routine-caregrooming/how-to-brush-your-cats-teeth/>