

How to Brush a Dog's Teeth

Eve Adamson

How to Brush Your Dog's Teeth Start your dog on a healthy dental regimen with help from this step-by-step slide show. Eve Adamson

You know you should. You mean to do it. But maybe the reason you haven't been brushing your dog's teeth is because you just aren't sure how. Well, break out your brushes and liver-flavored doggie toothpaste. It's time to stop procrastinating and start brushing!

Step one: Gather your supplies. You'll need a toothbrush (any style) and toothpaste made for dogs.

Step two: For several days in a row, call your dog, praise and pet him. Let him sniff the brush and lick some of the paste off your finger.

Step three: Next, put some paste on the toothbrush and let your dog lick the paste off the brush. As he is licking, touch the brush to his teeth. Do this for at least a week.

Step four: Hold your dog's muzzle lightly with one hand, lifting up one side of his lips with your fingers near the corner of his mouth. Hold the brush in your other hand.

Step five: Brush the outside surfaces of the back teeth, using an up-and-down or circular motion. Do just one side for a week.

Step six: Repeat on the other side for another seven days.

Step seven: Lift up the lips in the front of your dog's mouth and brush the outside surfaces of the canine and front teeth. Keep praising and petting your dog as you go.

Step eight: For dogs who strongly resist brushing, or for added protection, try an enzyme mouth spray or rub-on gel product.

Step nine: Finish with a big reward — praise and a dental or fresh-breath treat work well.

Step ten: Repeat daily. Yes, daily! Veterinary dentists say that's best. Your dog will soon get used to the new brushing routine. And so will you!

For more information on how to protect your dog's oral health, check out the February 2008 issue of DOG FANCY.