

Reasons to Brush a Dog's Teeth

By regularly brushing a dog's teeth, you could add years to her life.

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According to research by the American Veterinary Dental Society, more than 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats develop periodontal disease by the age of three, a condition which can be prevented by regular at-home tooth brushing.

So in observance of National Pet Week, taking place from May 6 to 12, here are several reasons for brushing your dogs' teeth: Brushing a pet's teeth regularly can extend her lifespan. "Periodontal disease is a serious condition that causes gingivitis, loss of teeth, pain in the mouth and possibly even serious infections in the internal organs," said David Steele, a veterinarian with Advanced Animal Care in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. Preventing periodontal disease by brushing a dog's teeth regularly can reduce the occurrence of these conditions and increase a dog's lifespan. Brushing helps eliminate "doggie breath." Bad breath in dogs is often caused by periodontal disease, and brushing regularly can help prevent and correct this. Brushing at home reduces the chance a pet will have to be anesthetized to have his teeth cleaned. Not only is there a slight health risk in having a pet anesthetized for a complete cleaning by your vet, but the procedures can be costly, as well. "By brushing your dog's teeth on a daily basis, we may be able to help reduce and perhaps even eliminate the need for having your pet anesthetized by your veterinarian for a more thorough cleaning," Steele said. Brushing equals bonding. Though at first a pet may seem uncomfortable and you may feel awkward with brushing, it's possible that they will grow to enjoy the additional time spent with the owner. It's relatively easy. "While to some folks brushing your dog's teeth may be a daunting task, it doesn't really need to be," Steele said.

Anyone with questions about how to properly brush a dog's teeth should consult a veterinarian.

For more dog dental health tips, [click here](#).