

7 Simple Ways to Help Care for Your Dog's Teeth



Dogs depend on their teeth to crunch kibble, gnaw on bones, fetch sticks and squeak their favorite toys. Not only is protecting their pearly whites essential for allowing them to do their favorite things, dental disease can take a toll on your dog's health.

Why dog dental care is important

The buildup of tartar and plaque can cause periodontal disease, which is painful and can cause teeth to become loose and fall out.

Your vet probably recommended annual professional dental cleanings and a daily oral care routine for your dog that includes **brushing their teeth**. Despite the advantages, just **seven percent** of pet owners brush the dog's teeth daily.

7 dog-friendly ways to keep teeth healthy

Here's seven easy ways to care for your dog's teeth when daily brushing may lack.

1. Dental diet

The pet food aisle has several brands of kibble that were formulated to remove plaque and tartar. Some of the so-called "dental diets" are only available with a **prescription** from your veterinarian but others are stocked on the shelves and have received a seal of approval from the Veterinary Oral Health Council.

2. Bones

Not only do dogs love bones, gnawing on raw bones helps scrape plaque and tartar off their teeth.

Skip the rawhide and cooked bones, which can break or splinter and become dangerous choking hazards and opt for raw meat **bones** instead. Antler chews and bully sticks are also great, natural options for promoting good oral health in dogs that love to chew.

3. Dental chews

These treats were specifically designed to help clean your dog's teeth. The chews were designed with lots of raised areas that get into the nooks and crannies in your dog's mouth to remove plaque and tartar. Bonus: **Dog dental chews** often contain ingredients to help freshen your dog's breath.



4. Dental toys

Similar to dental treats, these chew toys were designed with lots of firm ridges that act like the bristles on a toothbrush and scrub plaque and tartar from your dog's teeth while they play.

Dental toys are a zero-calorie choice to improve your dog's oral health without adding extra calories to their diet and perfect for dogs who have sensitive stomachs that can be upset by new foods or treats.

5. Oral rinse

Think of oral rinses as doggie mouthwash. You add a measured amount to your dog's water bowl and the flavored rinses help freshen their breath and loosen plaque every time your dog takes a drink.

While most dogs won't notice an **oral rinse** added to their water, offer a separate bowl of fresh, rinse-free water just in case. You don't want your dog avoiding the water bowl because of the flavor of the rinse.

6. Dental wipes

For dogs that are comfortable with your fingers in their mouth, dental wipes are an option. You put the wipe on their teeth and use your fingers to scrub back and forth to remove plaque and tartar buildup.

The flavored, single use dental wipes won't clean your dog's teeth as well as a doggie toothbrush but can offer some benefit.

7. Supplements

Sprinkling a dietary supplement on your dog's food may be the easiest way to clean their teeth. Supplements are available as chews or powders and often made of natural ingredients.

The goal of **dental supplements** for dogs is to freshen their breath, loosen plaque and promote strong teeth and healthy gums.

Whether you brush your dog's teeth, add oral rinses to their water, offer bones, dental chews, treats or toys (or a combination of multiple **doggie dental care tools**), be consistent to get the best results.