

## Canine Teeth Brushing

Teeth brushing is best started at seven months of age once all the adult teeth are present. We recommend brushing the outside of the teeth once daily with a dog toothpaste using a high reward treat afterwards. Often, dogs will remind you to brush their teeth if you do this at the same time every day. The adult teeth start coming in around four months of age so you want to avoid the mouth between 4-7 months of age. You can start getting your puppy used to having their mouth handled whenever they are done with the play biting stage. This is also important in case you need to give medications at some point in their lives. Smaller breeds can be resistant to having their mouth handled yet they are usually more prone to dental disease and harder to medicate with food. Please continue to proceed as slowly as needed to allow this process to occur while giving verbal praise and treats as rewards. Gently open the mouth every day and reward, lift the lips and reward, eventually touching the gums and teeth with a cloth or your fingers with some tasty toothpaste, etc. Most dogs do not like their lips lifted so use the toothbrush like you would for yourself by placing it up under the lip while brushing. It is still good to teach your dog to lift their lip so that you or your vet can examine the teeth when needed.

If during any of the steps, your dog displays an aggressive response such as growling, stop whatever you are doing and simply do not provide a reward. Wait a few seconds until your dog is relaxed and return to a previously acceptable step so you can give a treat.