



## **80% of dogs and 72% of cats have signs of gum disease by age 3.**

**Gum disease can cause bad breath, discolored teeth and more serious problems, including tooth loss and infection.**

**Brushing your pet's teeth regularly helps prevent gum disease. Here's how you do it:**

**Assemble the right tools.** Choose a pet toothbrush or soft-bristled finger brush and toothpaste made just for pets in flavors like chicken or salmon. Don't use human toothpaste as it can upset your pet's stomach.

**Start slowly.** Place some paste on the brush and let your pet smell and taste it. Rub some paste on your pet's teeth and gums. Praise and reward your pet with a treat so they think of having their teeth brushed as a pleasant experience. Do this daily for a week.

**Begin brushing.** When it's time to brush, gently pull your pet's lips back and brush the outer surfaces of the teeth at a 45-degree angle for about 30 seconds. Gradually add more time and brush all tooth and gum surfaces. Remember to praise and reward your pet.

**Follow up.** Give your pet appropriate chew toys or dental treats between brushings and visit the vet at least once a year for a professional cleaning and dental health evaluation.

Guidelines recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association. ([www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org))