

# BRUSHING A DOG'S TEETH

## SET UP TOOLS IN ADVANCE!



**You won't have much time to keep the dog's interest, so be prepared!**

- Dog-formulated toothpaste.
- Toothbrush or finger brush made specifically for dogs.
- High-value treats for rewarding.



## GET IN POSITION!

- *Wherever* the dog is comfortable.
- Kneel at the dogs side or in front of them (if it's safe).
- Do not lean over the dog or hold them down.
- Avoid appearing threatening.

## MAKE TEETH BRUSHING POSITIVE!

- Praise the whole time and end on a positive note.
- Reward the dog immediately after the brushing with whatever the dog finds most interesting (high-value treat, ball, affection).



## REMEMBER!

- **The point is to *work up* to about 30 seconds on each side, but you may not be able to brush for that long in the beginning. Don't push the dog!**
- **Never use human toothpastes – they contain chemicals toxic to dogs.**
- **Never use a human toothbrush – the bristles are too hard.**
- **Some bleeding can be normal, especially at first.**
- **If the teeth are loose and/or plaque build-up is severe, the dog needs to see a veterinarian to be assessed for periodontal disease. At this point, you need to discontinue brushing the dog's teeth.**

## 1. APPLY PASTE TO THE BRUSH

- Use pea-sized amount for smaller dogs
- Use a dime-sized amount for medium to larger dogs

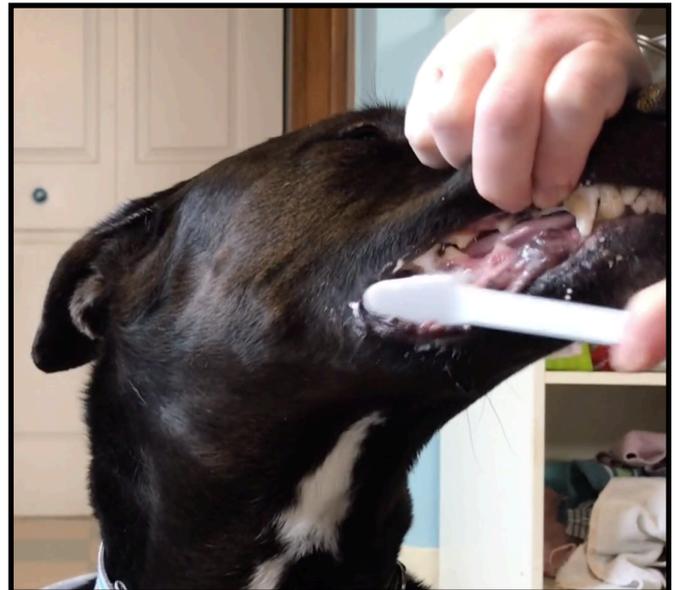
## 2. LIFT THE UPPER LIP TO EXPOSE THE TEETH

- Gently open the mouth and touch the teeth to get them used to you
- Placing your hand on top of the muzzle and pulling the lip upward usually works best



## 3. BRUSH THE TEETH IN SMALL CIRCLES

- Along the top and bottom on each side
- Focus on the back molars where food particles collect the most
- The underside and backs of teeth do **not** need to be brushed
- Make sure you're reaching the gum line when possible



## 4. PRAISE & REWARD

- Make it positive with praise, attention, and a yummy treat
- Be aware of whether or not the dog can have treats, but always give lots of affection and positive reinforcement

