

Dental Health

Teeth are considered a carnivore's most valuable anatomical part. Teeth are necessary to shred, tear and chew food. Moreover, periodontal disease can actually seriously harm a dog's liver, kidneys, and even brain. Ideally, dogs should have their teeth brushed (or at least wiped with a towel) daily along with a yearly professional cleaning. However, plaque build-up and frequency of cleanings may be reduced by feeding a nourishing diet that promotes natural tooth cleaning.

Dental treats are not always as effective as the packaging proclaims. Synthetic additives or coatings may prevent bad breath, but not always tartar build-up. Likewise, rawhide coated with enzymes or rope toys marketed as "floss" have not been shown to be effective dental aids. In fact, studies evaluating the effectiveness of biscuits, food style (dry or moist), and dental additives are inconclusive.

Mechanical abrasion is the only scientifically-proven factor that prevents plaque and tartar build-up between dental cleanings. Daily brushing (as well as select bones, jerkies, and low-carbohydrate treats) can help accomplish the necessary abrasion. Raw bones, either whole or part of a Raw Diet, are considered the best dental aids available; they provide effective abrasion without the danger of splintering or impaction common to rawhide and improperly-cooked bones.

The idea that kibble provides the necessary abrasion is a myth. The next time you eat a crunchy cereal, pay attention to whether it cleans your teeth, or instead deposits gummy pieces of mashed cereal at the base of them that you need to clean off.

Raw bones reduce plaque and tartar naturally, through mechanical abrasion, and high meat, low-carbohydrate diets reduce the amount of carbohydrates available to mouth bacteria. Dogs and cats should be fed a rotation diet composed of raw and grain-free, low-carbohydrate food choice. Yet, each pet is unique, so it is best to alter your pet's diet gradually, and stay in contact with your veterinarian.