



## **Dental Hygiene Health Kit**

**Keeping your pet's teeth free of calculus (tartar) is vital to good health and longevity.**

- ❖ Fractured teeth and/or dental disease can cause discomfort and sometimes extreme pain that may lead to behavioral changes, difficulty eating, and difficulty with chewing or playing with toys.
- ❖ The bacteria and oral infection that results from dental disease and tooth decay effects more than just the mouth. Septicemia, liver, kidney, and premature heart disease are all possible consequences of poor dental hygiene.

### **Helpful tips to keep your pet's teeth clean**

- ✓ Brush teeth regularly with pet only dentifrice (toothpaste)
  - Pick an appropriate toothbrush. The ideal dog toothbrush will have extra soft bristles, a long handle, and angled head to better fit the mouth. Small dogs and cats usually tolerate a fingertip brush more willingly.
  - Select the appropriate toothpaste. We recommend toothpastes that contain enzymes that help control plaque. Try to avoid toothpastes with baking soda, detergents, or salts that are sometimes found in human pastes. Try to incorporate the paste between bristles. Pet toothpaste can be purchased here at the hospital or local pet stores.
  - Most pets accept brushing if they are approached in a gentle manner. Start slowly to make the training process positive.
    - Start by using a washcloth or piece of gauze to wipe on teeth, front and back. Do this twice a day for a week to acclimate your pet to the process.
    - Put a small amount of toothpaste on the gauze and repeat the process to acclimate your pet to the taste of the toothpaste.
    - Replace the washcloth/gauze with your pet's toothbrush - with enzymatic toothpastes, it is more important to coat your pet's teeth with the toothpaste rather than to scrub the toothpaste onto the teeth. Focus on the outside surface (near the cheek) as it is most prone to tartar buildup.
- ✓ Dental wipes, rinses, and pads - these products help remove plaque deposits from the surface of the teeth
- ✓ OraVet - a wax-like substance applied to the tooth surface on a weekly basis to help prevent plaque attaching to the tooth
- ✓ Dental treats
  - Dogs: Greenies chews, CET chews, and Hill's T/D all help reduce plaque buildup by friction against the tooth surface from chewing. These treats need to be used on a daily basis to achieve results.
  - Cats: CET chews, Greenie treats, and Hill's T/D use
  - CET chews include ingredients that help prevent the mineralization of plaque.