



Animal Health Clinic of Funkstown

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USING BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES TO TEACH YOUR PET TO ACCEPT THE TOOTHBRUSH

- This process may take several weeks- there may be two steps forward and one step back...hang in there!
- Have tiny bits of a food your pet LOVES available
- Pick a time when your pet is likely to be hungry
- Pick a quiet time...not the first thing after you get home from work
- As long as they are quiet, responding to requests and allowing you to manipulate their mouths, they get IMMEDIATE food treats. If they resist in any fashion...take your treats away and end the session
- Use a calm, gently tone of voice
- A small dog may work best on your lap; a cat probably would be best next to you on a large chair or couch; a large dog should be asked to sit on the floor
- Begin a brief time of affectionate touching and giving treats if they are staying calm
- Next, lightly touch around the face and lips. If they remain still, give an IMMEDIATE reward. If they pull away or resist...end the session and try again in a little while.
- Slowly progress from manipulating the lips, to running your fingers along the teeth and gums, then add in a moist soft cloth on your finger, then add a veterinary oral hygiene product on the cloth
- THEN bring the toothbrush out, touch it to their face, put it under their lips and gently work it around. Concentrate on the outside surface of the teeth under the lips. There are a variety of toothbrush types
- Again...This process may take several weeks- there may be two steps forward and one step back...hang in there!
- The goal would be to spend two or three minutes every day brushing your pet's teeth
- Use a circular motion and pay special attention to the area around the gumline
- Any manipulation of the gums and teeth is a positive step, if your pet chews on the toothbrush, call it a *success!*
- Please ask us for assistance- we would be happy to coach you with your behavior modification timing and techniques



If a tiger can be taught to jump through a ring of fire it is possible for you to teach your pet to accept daily oral care. You must begin the process slowly. It may be several weeks before you are actually brushing the teeth.