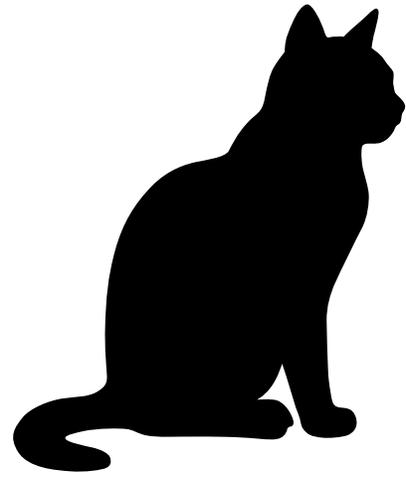


## A Purr-fect Guide to Feline Dental Care

*Brought to you by Westbrook Animal Hospital*

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## Why Feline Dental Care Is So Important

Cats are famously independent, but they still rely on us to help keep them healthy, especially when it comes to dental care! Proper oral hygiene can ward off painful gum disease, keep that kitty breath smelling fresh, and prevent issues that can affect the rest of your cat's body.

## Getting Started with At-Home Brushing

While not every cat is thrilled about having their teeth brushed, a gentle approach and a little patience can go a long way in making brushing a positive experience for both of you.

### 1. Acclimate Your Cat to Handling

- Begin by touching their cheeks and lips softly.
- Reward them with praise or a tasty cat treat each time they remain calm.

### 2. Choose Cat-Friendly Tools

- Use a **cat-specific toothbrush** or a finger brush designed for felines.
- Opt for **pet-safe, cat-flavored toothpaste** (poultry or fish flavors are common).
- **Never use human toothpaste**, which can contain harmful ingredients like xylitol.

### 3. Short and Sweet Sessions

- Start with a few gentle strokes on just a couple of teeth.
- Gradually work up to brushing the outside of the teeth using small, circular motions.

- Keep sessions **brief** and **reward** good behavior.

#### 4. **Aim for Consistency**

- Even brushing just **2-3 times a week** can make a big difference.
- Daily brushing (if your cat tolerates it) is ideal.

#### 5. **Stay Positive**

- Offer soothing words, gentle petting, and a favorite treat when you're done.
- End each session on a happy note so your cat looks forward to next time!

## **No Time to Brush? Other Ways to Keep Those Kitties Purring**

If brushing isn't practical or your cat simply refuses the toothbrush, consider these easy and effective alternatives:

### 1. **Dental Wipes**

- Gently wipe the surface of the teeth and gums to help remove plaque.
- Choose products specifically designed for cats.

### 2. **Water Additives**

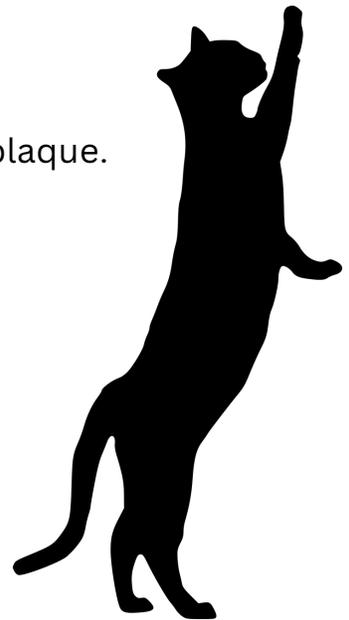
- A convenient way to help reduce plaque and freshen breath.
- Make sure the additive is **vet-approved** for feline use.

### 3. **Oral Gels or Rinses**

- Apply directly to the gums to minimize bacterial growth.
- Look for the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) seal on products.

### 4. **Dental Diets**

- Specialized kibble (such as **Hill's T/D** or **Royal Canin Dental**) can help scrape away plaque as your cat chews.
- Ask our veterinarians for recommendations tailored to your cat's needs.



## Chews & Treats: Tasty Tools for Tartar Control

Even the finickiest feline may love a crunchy treat! Incorporate **vet-approved** options that help clean teeth:

### 1. Feline Greenies Dental Treats

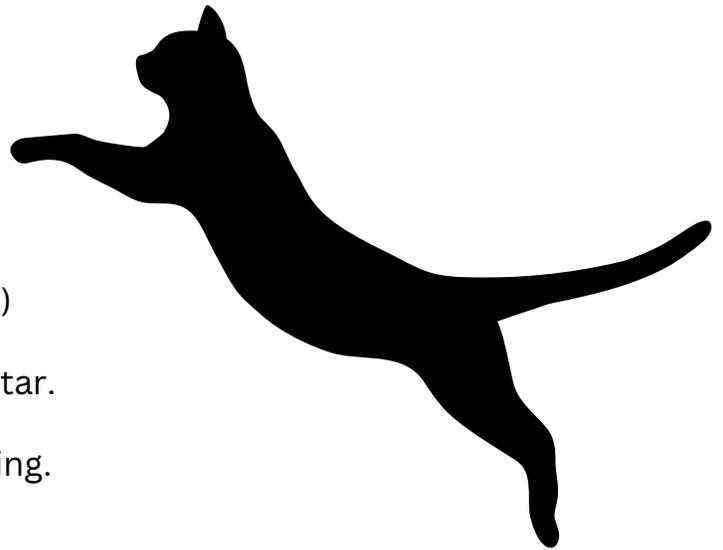
- Popular for flavor and teeth-cleaning action.
- Come in multiple cat-friendly flavors like salmon or chicken.

### 2. Purina DentaLife Cat Treats

- Porous texture helps scrub teeth.
- Often well-accepted by picky eaters.

### 3. Virbac C.E.T. Enzymatic Chews (for Cats)

- Enzymes help break down plaque and tartar.
- A good choice for kitties who enjoy chewing.



**Note:** Always supervise treat time to ensure your cat chews properly and doesn't choke!

## Safe Chewing Options

Cats are natural hunters and enjoy chewing or biting during play. Offer them cat-safe toys to help maintain oral health:

- **Rubber Cat Chew Toys:** Some are designed with nubby textures that help clean teeth.
- **Catnip-Infused Toys:** Entice your kitty to chew and play, which can help clean their teeth.

Ensure any toy is sturdy and free from small parts that could be swallowed!

## When to See the Vet

Even with the best at-home care, your cat needs **routine veterinary dental check-ups** to keep those fangs in tip-top shape. At **Westbrook Animal Hospital**, we can:

- Perform a detailed oral exam, often under sedation for a thorough look.
- Provide **professional cleanings** to remove tartar and polish teeth.
- Treat any issues such as infections, tooth resorption, or damaged teeth.

Call **207-797-4747** or email **westbrookah@gmail.com** to schedule an appointment.

## Spot the Signs of Dental Trouble

If you notice any of these warning signs, it's time to give us a call:

- **Bad breath** (more than the usual “fishy” cat smell).
- **Red or swollen gums.**
- Pawing at the mouth or **difficult eating.**
- **Drizzling** or dropping food while chewing.
- Teeth that appear **loose, broken, or discolored.**



Early detection is key to preventing more serious health problems.

## Fun Feline Fact

Did you know that **adult cats have 30 teeth**, compared to a dog's 42 and our 32? Those 30 teeth are crucial for everything from grooming to hunting, so let's keep them sharp and healthy!

## DIY Cat Treat Recipe

*(For fresh breath and a happy cat!)*



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup **canned pumpkin** (unsweetened)
- ¼ cup **finely grated carrots**
- 1 **egg**
- 1 ½ cups **whole wheat flour** (or cat-safe alternative)
- 1 tablespoon **dried catnip** (optional for extra fun!)

### Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to **350°F**.
2. Combine pumpkin, egg, and carrots in a bowl.
3. Gradually mix in flour and catnip (if using), forming a dough.
4. Roll out dough on a floured surface and cut into small, bite-sized shapes.
5. Place on a baking sheet and bake for **15-20 minutes**, or until slightly golden.
6. Allow treats to cool completely before offering them to your feline friend.

*(Always introduce new treats slowly and check with your vet if your cat has any dietary restrictions.)*

## Wrapping It All Up

A comprehensive dental care routine, complete with **gentle brushing**, **vet-approved treats**, and **regular check-ups**, will help keep your cat's mouth healthy, their breath fresher, and their body happier overall.

For more information or to schedule a dental exam, contact us at:

**Westbrook Animal Hospital**

Phone: **207-797-4747**

Email: **[westbrookah@gmail.com](mailto:westbrookah@gmail.com)**



Your cat may be mysterious, but their dental care doesn't have to be. Let's work together to ensure those pearly whites stay strong and bright!