



Onion River Animal Hospital  
2386 Airport Rd., Berlin VT  
802.223.7765 hello@orahvt.com

# Oral Health for Dogs and Cats

Dental disease is common, painful, and expensive to fix once present. Prevention, whenever possible, is the best and most cost effective way to keep your pet's mouth healthy. Here are some options for oral health management:

## Brushing

Brushing teeth is the best and we encourage it! Pet Smile Toothpaste has enzymes that will help even if you only put it into the mouth without brushing and you can get it at ORAH or online (Pro tip- even labs don't love the cheese flavor!) For the brush, there are regular toothbrushes and finger tip ones that fit like a glove finger.

You will need to "condition" your dog to enjoy the toothpaste... and then enjoy the toothpaste with a finger touching the mouth... and then with a pasty finger in the mouth and then with the pasty brush touching the mouth, and then in the mouth, etc, etc. Ideally you would brush all the teeth, esp the back teeth, once daily. Here is an AKC video on how to brush teeth properly:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6S50BZU1D0> For help with getting to the point of brushing, try searching for "conditioning AND behavior AND tooth brushing AND dog (or cat)" and watch some of the behavior videos that demonstrate good conditioning practices.

Many clients can't manage to work this into their lives and I understand that! If you are one of those, I recommend that you consider some other products.

## Chew treats and diets that mechanically clean

Some diets are designed to clean the teeth as the pet chews his food. Additionally, lots of chew toys exist that are designed to mechanically clean the teeth as the pet chews the treat. These diets and treats work only if your pet actually chews the treat and, ideally, chews on both sides of his mouth.

We recommend Hill's TD kibble regularly and many pets like this mixed with their regular food.



Onion River Animal Hospital  
2386 Airport Rd., Berlin VT  
802.223.7765 hello@orahvt.com

For dogs, I commonly recommend Hextra chews by C.E.T. These have an antiseptic incorporated into the product. Otherwise, Virbec, C.E.T., and Greenies all make nice products.

## Enzymatic Powders and Water Additives

For small dogs and cats who tend to not crunch their dental treats or who won't chew on a medicated rawhide, consider enzymatic powders that you topdress on your pet's food. Perio Support is one example. I also really like water additives, especially for households with only a small number of small pets. Large dogs tend to go through too much water and are too messy with it for water additives to be practical, but an all-cat household can benefit tremendously!

If you are selecting a product, consider one that is approved by the Veterinary Oral Health Council.  
<https://vohc.org/accepted-products/>

Onion River Animal Hospital is committed to reducing fear and stress responses in all our patients!

