

# West Central Veterinary Services

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316 N Jackson St  
Greencastle, IN 46135  
Phone: (765) 301-4369

1472 S US Hwy 41  
Rockville, IN 47872  
Phone: (765) 569-3210

212 W US Hwy 136  
Veedersburg, IN 47987  
Phone: (765) 294-2203

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## Dental Home Care for Your Cat or Dog

If your pet has just received a dental or you are considering one, it is important to understand that without proper home care you will be considering another dental in as little as 1 year. There are many ways to help ensure your pet's dental health. Though you may be very busy or your four-legged friend won't let you near his mouth, there are numerous products to keep your pet's mouth healthier longer.

The best way to keep teeth healthy is brushing. This is the best way to remove the plaque that leads to tartar that accumulates on your pet's teeth. Daily brushing is best, but even 2-3 times a week will make a great difference. You only need to concentrate on the outsides of the teeth because the tongue will take care of the insides. It is obviously best to train young animals from the start, but cooperative adults can be trained for brushing. Human toothpaste can upset your pet's stomach, so only toothpaste made especially for pets should be used. It may be helpful to use flavored pet toothpaste; it helps clean and tastes good too. We carry CET toothpaste in vanilla-mint and poultry flavors. However a plain animal toothbrush and a little baking soda will work as well. You can also rub the outsides of the teeth with a washcloth or gauze pad.

After your dental, you can choose for us to apply a sealant to your pet's teeth. Oravet is a wax seal that needs to then be applied weekly by you at home. This helps to coat the teeth and not allow plaque to take hold.

There are also solutions that you add to the drinking water or sprinkle on the food. CET AquaDent and Perio-Support both work to keep the plaque that accumulates on the teeth soft. This delays the formation of tartar that leads to gum irritation. These products also help to keep breath fresh. Similarly, there are rinses that you can squirt on the outside of the teeth.

Greenies, CET Dental Chews and even rawhides (get the ones with chlorhexidine) can help keep plaque buildup down. It is important with dogs to be sure the chewy is properly sized to your pet. Bones that are too small can be swallowed and ones that are too big may be ignored.

Science Diet has a food that can be fed as a treat or as a complete diet. T/D is designed so that the tooth penetrates the kibble before it breaks apart-essentially scrubbing the tooth. A few treats a day can be beneficial to plaque reduction.

Brushing is by far the best, but combining these can give your pet the chance for good dental health.