



## HOW TO BRUSH YOUR KITTEN'S TEETH (and why it is important)

An article by dvm360 in association with Kathryn Primm, DVM, and modified for Evergreen Veterinary Hospital

The plaque on the teeth can harden into tartar very quickly. If you do your part to remove the plaque before this occurs, you are helping your kitten's overall health and comfort. Kittens can learn to tolerate and even seek tooth brushing (really!). Here is how to get started.

### ***Brush basics***

First, pick a toothbrush. You have a lot of options, including a brush that looks like yours and a soft rubbery brush that fits over your finger. Choose the one you feel you will be able to safely and comfortably use. If you cannot find a brush you like, try using a washcloth to clean your kitten's teeth. You can also ask the Evergreen Team for guidance.

### ***Start slow***

Start teaching your kitten that toothbrushing is fun by giving special treats every time you show your kitten the brush. Slowly introduce the brush into the mouth, but never advance past where they are comfortable. Move forward, and if your kitten withdraws from your touch, go back to where they were still happy. Do not use force. It is very unlikely that you will brush every tooth on the first try. Your kitten has baby teeth, so you have time to introduce the idea before the adult ones come in. Take your time and keep it positive to avoid creating aversions.

### ***Paste possibilities***

You can also try using a toothpaste made specifically for pets. This can help make the experience more fun for you kitten because they taste great. Let them try out different flavors to find what they like best, however, do not use toothpaste meant for people.

### ***Advance a little***

Once your kitten is more comfortable, you can work up to longer brushing periods. Praise and reward their tolerance along the way. If you keep the toothbrush in a drawer or container, store the other goodies there so they learn that the toothbrush is just another one of those great things you do together! Kittens understand mutual grooming, so take advantage of their natural tolerance.

Ask a member of the Evergreen Veterinary Team for more tips today!