

## Bad Breath in Dogs

By P.J. Lacette

Best Paw Forward Inc., 1835 Oak Haven Plantation Rd., Osteen FL 32764-8872

[www.bestpaw.com](http://www.bestpaw.com) [bestpaw@bestpaw.com](mailto:bestpaw@bestpaw.com) 407-321-1006

friend us at Best Paw Forward Florida on Facebook

If smooching with Fido makes you reel back in response to the noxious odor coming from his mouth, tooth and gum problems are likely to blame. Pups and kittens shedding baby teeth may also produce extra drool and the fever that can affect housetraining along with the resulting bad breath.

Bits of food from his meals and snacks will linger, decompose and attract bacteria, causing tartar buildup (plaque) and oral infections, receding gums and that awful smell. It is even worse, though the reasons are unclear, in toy and small breeds, and in purebred cats, with Maltese dogs topping the list.

Bacteria from accumulated tartar breaking off can also lead to heart infections and heart murmurs.

Click and treat your way to easier daily brushing to help in between pup's annual deep cleaning at the veterinary office. Use diluted baking soda or a small amount of one of the doggie toothpastes on a bit of cheesecloth or on a doggie toothbrush to clean the teeth daily. Brush at a 45-degree angle with at least three horizontal strokes across each set of teeth.

Never use regular people toothpaste for dogs that will swallow the soapy substance, likely resulting in an upset stomach and diarrhea.

Chlorhexidine sprays and mouthwashes help too, especially in addition to brushing or removing tartar frequently with double-ended dental tools (for right handed or left handed scraping) available in pet supply catalogs, or at dog shows or flea markets.

To prevent future issues and because older pets with halitosis may be battling kidney or liver disease, most vets recommend an annual extensive tooth cleaning under anesthesia (all pets should get annual checkups with dental exams. Drool-induced wetness and mouth infections can also cause irritation of the lips and facial skin folds.

Your vet may use an ultrasonic system while your dog is under anesthesia.

To further prevent and treat bad breath in dogs, do some research into feeding raw meaty bones as part of a tartar prevention diet, and if you use canned food for your dog consider it a supplement or treat, not as the entire diet. Our own dogs and cats get commercial raw products including Blue Ridge and Raw Health as well as the best dry foods such as Orijen, Acana, Great Life and Life's Abundance.

Appropriately-sized hard durable nylon chew toys and sterilized processed hollowed marrow bones (the only cooked bones our one dogs get) are also helpful for many dogs. Some breeds like the Maltese, Shetland sheepdog, toy poodles and Chinese crested may have a tendency toward brittle teeth, and owners of those breeders should exercise more caution.

Our own dogs are not allowed to have any rawhide, any other dried flesh products, nor similar products.

For many pet owners, removing severely damaged teeth is far more cost effective than paying for crowns. Most dogs experience no great difficulties from one or more missing teeth.

***Best Paw Forward Inc. assumes no liability for injury to you or your pet incurred by following these descriptions or procedures – this article is intended to guide you to discussions with your veterinarian. Many teeth-cleaning techniques are only appropriate on confident calm dogs that accept extensive handling and restraint, and are especially inappropriate for nervous, sensitive or aggressive dogs, or for a rescue dog new to your household.***