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Puppy Dental Care Guide: When to Start Brushing & Chews

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Those needle-sharp teeth aren't just for chewing your favourite sneakers; they are the precursors to your dog's adult health. A common question new owners ask is: "They're just baby teeth, so do I really need to brush them?"

The short answer? Yes. And the sooner, the better.

Establishing a dental routine early isn't just about keeping those pearly whites sparkling; it's about setting your puppy up for a lifetime of healthy joy. Here is how to navigate dental care from the moment you bring your new best friend home.

The "Touch" Phase: 8 to 16 Weeks

You should start thinking about puppy dental care the week you bring them home. However, you aren't going in with a toothbrush and determination on day one.

At this stage, the goal is **desensitisation**. You want your puppy to learn that having their mouth handled is a normal, safe, and even fun experience.

- **Lift the Lip:** When you are cuddling, gently lift their lip for a second, then praise them enthusiastically.
- **The Finger Brush:** Wrap a piece of gauze around your finger or use a soft silicone finger brush. Dip it in warm water (or a tiny bit of dog-safe toothpaste) and gently run it along the gum line.
- **Keep it Short:** We are talking seconds, not minutes. If they squiggle away, let them go and try again later.

Expert Tip: Never use human toothpaste. It often contains xylitol or fluoride, which are toxic to dogs. Stick to poultry or beef-flavoured options formulated specifically for pets.

Why Bother if Baby Teeth Fall Out?

It is a fair question. Why scrub teeth that are going to end up on the carpet eventually anyway?

While the deciduous teeth (baby teeth) will fall out, the gums remain. Gum disease can start developing before your puppy even has their full set of adult chompers. In fact, roughly 80% of dogs show signs of oral health issues by the age of three.

By starting early, you are preventing gingivitis and, perhaps more importantly, training your dog to tolerate dental care before they become a 30kg rebellious teenager who refuses to open their mouth.

Navigating the Teething Phase

Between three and six months, your puppy's mouth is a construction zone. Baby teeth fall out and adult teeth erupt. During this time, their mouth will be sore.

Be extremely gentle during this window. If they seem sensitive or shy away from the finger brush, take a break from scrubbing and focus on gentle handling. Providing appropriate rubber chew toys can help soothe their gums during this prickly period.

The 6-Month Milestone: Introducing Puppy Dental Chews

Once your puppy reaches six months of age, the game changes. They likely have most of their adult teeth, and you have a new tool to help fight against plaque: [GREENIES™ Puppy Dental Treats](#).

While brushing is the gold standard, we know life gets busy. That's where a daily dental chew comes in. It's the easiest way to clean their teeth while giving them a moment of pure joy.

Why wait until 6 months?

It is crucial to wait until your pup is at least six months old (and weighs over 2kg) before introducing these treats. GREENIES™ Puppy Dental Treats are specifically formulated for this age group.

- **Softer Texture:** They have a softer, chewier texture designed for developing jaws and new adult teeth.
- **Brain & Teeth Support:** They contain DHA to support brain development and calcium for healthy teeth and jaws.
- **The Toothbrush Shape:** The unique chewy texture helps fight plaque and tartar buildup while they chew.

Think of it as a daily health hack. You get the peace of mind that you're fighting tartar; they get a delicious reward.

Signs Your Puppy Needs a Vet Check

Even with the best home care, genetics play a role in dental health. Keep an eye out for these signs that necessitate a trip to your vet:

- **Retained Baby Teeth:** Sometimes a baby tooth refuses to fall out when the adult tooth pushes through, creating a "double row" of teeth. This can trap food and cause alignment issues.
- **Bad Breath:** Puppy breath changes as they age, but it should never smell offensive or rotten.
- **Bleeding Gums:** A little blood on a toy during teething is normal, but persistent bleeding is not.

A Lifetime of Smiles

Dental care doesn't have to be a chore. It can be a bonding moment, a quick brush followed by a belly rub, or the excitement in their eyes when they hear the GREENIES™ Dental Treat bag rustle.

By starting these habits young, you are doing more than cleaning teeth; you are investing in their long-term health, ensuring they can chomp, chew, and smile comfortably for years to come.

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