February is National Pet Dental Health Month, sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Veterinary Dental Society and Hills Pet Nutrition, Inc., to promote pet oral health and increase awareness of the importance of pet dental care.

As inflammation of the gum continues, bad breath becomes noticeable, and bone loss begins to occur. Periodontal disease affects the tissues surrounding the teeth of an estimated 80% of dogs and 70% of cats over 3 years of age.

Periodontal disease begins with plaque—tiny particles of bacteria and food that build up on tooth surfaces. If left unchecked, the bacteria begin to form a sticky, opaque layer called plaque. As this plaque system extends, it becomes hard, or calculus. Over time, this calculus can cause gingivitis, a disease of the bone rather than the teeth. As the bone tissue is destroyed, teeth may become loose or fall out.

There are some more serious consequences of an unhealthy mouth than tooth loss. These destructions caused by periodontal disease can weaken the bone until it is easily fractured, particularly in small dog breeds, and bacteria present in the mouth of an animal with periodontal disease can spread through the body and affect vital organs such as the heart, lungs, kidneys, and liver.

Now for the good news—periodontal disease is completely preventable! If plaque is left to build up, bacteria can multiply in the gingiva (the gums surrounding the teeth). As these bacteria thrive on sugars in the mouth, they secrete their protective matrix, which can be seen as a yellow to white film called calculus. If allowed to build up, this calculus can serve as a home for bacteria that can cause periodontal disease.

DIETS AND CHEWS

In addition to daily tooth brushing, feeding diets specially formulated for oral care, and providing your pet with toys, “chews” and other toys can help to prevent plaque from accumulating and hardening into calculus. Dry foods formulated for oral scrubbing to remove plaque, and chews formulated to promote healthy gums and teeth need to be chosen properly.

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

DIETS AND CHEWS

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

BRUSHING

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

DIETS AND CHEWS

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

DIETS AND CHEWS

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

DIETS AND CHEWS

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

DIETS AND CHEWS

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.

DIETS AND CHEWS

Tooth brushing is the easiest way to remove and prevent the buildup of plaque. Many natural gums, especially non-plastic ones, have been shown to prevent plaque buildup and to be safe even for pets with medical problems such as diabetes. While brushing, pet owners should work towards a goal of brushing their pets’ teeth twice daily. To brush your pet’s teeth, please follow these steps:

1. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
2. Hold your pet’s mouth open with your free hand.
3. Gently scrape the toothbrush against the gum line and tooth surface.
4. Brush for a minute or two.