

Dental DOs and DON'Ts

From *Fur the Love of Pets* by Dr. Ann Hohenhaus <http://www.amcny.org/amc-blog/>

Because February is National Pet Dental Health Month, I spoke to all three of the AMC's veterinary dentists to get a list of dental DOs and DON'Ts for my readers. A big shout-out to Drs. Dan Carmichael, Django Martel and Stephen Riback for their help in compiling this list.

Dental DON'Ts – Bones, doggie breath and furry tennis balls

Our three dentists spend much of their time repairing fractured teeth. They blame hard nylon "bones" as a major cause of fractured teeth in dogs. According to Dr. Riback, "Any bone you think might break your tooth if you bit down on it is not one you should give to your dog."

Don't tolerate doggie breath in your dog (or cat). Bad breath in your Bassett, Bichon or Bernese is not normal and is very likely a sign of periodontal disease. Stinky breath in your pet means it's time to schedule a dental cleaning with your pet's veterinarian.

Although tennis balls are on your dog's DO list, the tennis ball fur is very abrasive to teeth, making furry tennis balls a DON'T in the mind of veterinary dentists.



Dental DOs – Toothbrushing, VOHC, dental cleaning with anesthesia

Topping the list of dental DOs is daily toothbrushing for your dog and cat. If your pet won't tolerate brushing, you can use special dental wipes to clean the teeth. DO select oral hygiene products like toothpaste, tartar reducing diets and treats based on the products recommended by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC). DO choose tartar control products and dental wipes containing hexametaphosphate, a product that research has shown to decrease tartar buildup on teeth. The final DO is to make a call now for an appointment to see your pet's veterinarian to discuss a complete dental cleaning while your pet is under general anesthesia.