

Reasons to Brush Your Cat's Teeth

Brushing your cat's teeth regularly could add years to its life.

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Brushing your cat's teeth benefits your cat's overall health. According to research by the American Veterinary Dental Society, more than 70 percent of cats develop periodontal disease by the age of 3, a condition which can be prevented by regular at-home tooth brushing.

So in observance of National Pet Week, which is May 6 to 12, here are some reasons for brushing your cat's teeth:

Brushing cats' teeth regularly can extend their lifespan.

"Periodontal disease is a serious condition that causes gingivitis, loss of teeth, pain in the mouth and possibly even serious infections in the internal organs," said David Steele, a veterinarian with Advanced Animal Care in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. Preventing periodontal disease by brushing a pet's teeth regularly can reduce the occurrence of these conditions and increase a pet's lifespan.

Brushing cats' teeth helps eliminate bad breath, which is often caused by pet dental or periodontal disease, and brushing your cat's teeth regularly can help prevent and correct this.

Brushing your cat's teeth at home reduces the chance your cat will have to be anesthetized to have its teeth cleaned. Not only is there a slight health risk in having a cat anesthetized for a complete cleaning by your vet, but the procedures can be costly as well.

"By brushing your pet's teeth on a daily basis, we may be able to help reduce and perhaps even eliminate the need for having your pet anesthetized by your veterinarian for a more thorough cleaning," Steele said. Brushing your cat's teeth equals bonding. Though at first a cat may seem uncomfortable and you may feel awkward with brushing, it is possible that they will grow to enjoy the additional time spent with the owner.

It's relatively easy.

"While to some folks brushing your cat's teeth may be a daunting task, it doesn't really need to be," Steele said.

Anyone with questions about how to properly brush their cat's teeth should consult with their veterinarian.

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