

FAQs

(Frequently Asked Questions)

Easy Brush[®]

The **Chew-It-Yourself** Toothbrush for **DOGS**[®]

Why do dogs need their teeth brushed/cleaned?

Commercial dog foods contain carbohydrates and other ingredients that support oral bacteria, leading to the formation of plaque and tartar (calculus). If this material is not cleaned off of your dog's teeth, it can lead to bad breath, gingivitis, infection of the bone surrounding the tooth, tooth loss, and systemic infection. Inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) can make it painful for your dog to eat, causing it to lose weight and drop food from its mouth. The toxins produced by the oral infection can get into the bloodstream and spread to vital organs.

What is the difference between "plaque," "tartar," and "gingivitis?"

When your dog eats, food debris and dissolved nutrients remain at the junction of the gum and tooth. Bacteria begin to grow on those nutrients and form a soft, whitish film called "**plaque**." Plaque is relatively easy to brush off, and the action of chewing harder foods (like dry dog food or dog treats) removes plaque from much of the tooth surface. (That is why dogs that are fed only canned food have more dental problems.) However, some plaque remains along the gum line and between teeth. Minerals in the saliva become deposited in the plaque and form a rough, hard-to-remove layer called "**tartar**" or "calculus." Tartar provides a structure on the otherwise smooth tooth for more bacteria to attach. The bacteria exude toxins that inflame the surrounding gum tissues, causing the gum tissue to become swollen, red, and painful, and to bleed easily when pressure is applied. This inflammation is called "**gingivitis**."

How was the Easy Brush[®] invented?

Most dogs do not like to have their teeth brushed, and most people do not like to brush their dog's teeth. It is generally a negative experience for the dog, and a time consuming chore for the dog owner. Because dogs do not like the experience, it also inhibits the bond between dog and owner. The Easy Brush was invented by a dog owner that thought, after brushing his dogs' teeth using a standard dog toothbrush, "There has to be a better way to do this." He observed the way dogs instinctively orient bones in their front paws and chew on the ends to get to the tasty marrow inside, and then designed a toothbrush that uses this natural tendency, to get his dogs to *enjoy brushing their own teeth!*

How does the Easy Brush work?

The Easy Brush works by mimicking a natural bone: your dog chews on the end of the "bone" to get at the tasty reward, in this case a flavorful dog toothpaste. As your dog chews on the end of the Easy Brush, the bristles in the brush pockets brush food debris and plaque away up to the gum line. *Your dog is instinctively preprogrammed to this behavior and actually enjoys it.*

Why is the Easy Brush better than other "dental bones?"

Edible dental treats and plastic or rubber chew toys help clean off plaque on the chewing surfaces of the tooth, but do not clean along the gum line. Some dental chew bones have bumps or knobs that help clean higher on the tooth, and rope toys help clean between teeth, but none of these clean along the gum line like a toothbrush. Only toothbrush bristles will clean away plaque from along the gum line. Brushing is recommended by veterinary dentists as the most effective way to clean teeth, but compliance is low because it is a chore for the owner, and most dogs do not like it. But, by using the Easy Brush, the **dog brushes its own teeth**, and actually enjoys doing it!

How do I use the Easy Brush?

As the name says, using the Easy Brush is easy! Simply squeeze a small amount of dog toothpaste into the bristles on both the top and bottom pockets of one end of the easy brush, wipe off any excess of the top of the bristles, and give it to your dog. After about two or three minutes of actual chewing time, take the Easy Brush away from your dog. Many dogs will spend some time trying to lick the toothpaste off the bristles before beginning to chew; do not count that time in the two or three minutes.

My dog is enjoying chewing on the Easy Brush, why do I have to take it away after a couple minutes?

Just as when you brush your own teeth, excessive brushing can irritate the gums. Also, by removing the Easy Brush before your dog is finished chewing it, it becomes a "treat" in the dog's mind, and your dog will want to chew it even more when you provide it the next time.

How old should my dog be before using the Easy Brush?

Puppies have a greater drive to chew than older dogs, but have "puppy teeth" that fall out and are replaced by the adult teeth. In general, it is best to start dogs on the Easy Brush once the adult teeth have erupted, 4-6 months of age.

What size Easy Brush is right for my dog?

Generally, dogs from about 12 lbs to 35 lbs can handle the small Easy Brush, for example; beagles, terriers, dachshunds, miniature poodles, Welsh corgies, larger Shih Tzu's, and similar sized breeds. Younger and smaller individuals of large breeds also can use the small Easy Brush. Most dogs from about 35 lbs to 80 lbs can handle the large Easy Brush, for example most retrievers, hounds, setters, pointers, Dobermans, spaniels, German shepherds, and the like. **HOWEVER**, different dog breeds have differently sized mouths compared to their body weight, so body weight is only a general indication. For example, a 40 lb small-mouthed breed may be more comfortable with the small Easy Brush, and a 30 lb large-mouthed breed may be fine with the large size Easy Brush. Also, many dogs larger

than 80 lbs can use the large Easy Brush without incident; however, the Easy Brush is not recommended for large, aggressive chewers. The bite strength of large dogs is such that they are capable of biting through nearly any object they can fit into their mouths, and large dogs that "chew to destroy" an object may damage the Easy Brush.

Why are there brushes on both sides of the Easy Brush?

Most dogs will orient the Easy Brush in their front paws and chew on the end. There are brushes on both sides so the dog brushes both its upper and lower teeth at the same time.

Why are there brushes on both ends of the Easy Brush?

There are brushes on both ends of the Easy Brush to double the longevity of the brush. Apply dog toothpaste to both sides of only one end of the device each time you give it to your dog; it will normally chew only the end with toothpaste. By alternating ends each time you use it, the Easy Brush will last twice as long.

How do I clean the Easy Brush?

Rinse off the Easy Brush, paying special attention to the brushes, and dry it. Or simply place it in the dishwasher to wash it.

How often should I use The Easy Brush?

For best results, give your dog the Easy Brush at least every other day.

What kind of toothpaste should I use?

Only use a highly palatable toothpaste specifically formulated for use with dogs. NEVER use human toothpastes as they contain ingredients that may be harmful to your dog if swallowed.

Why can't I just leave it with my dog?

Excessive brushing can irritate your dog's gums, just as could happen if you brushed your own teeth too long. Also, as with all non-food items your dog chews, there is a very small chance that your dog could damage the Easy Brush and create a swallowing hazard. This is mostly a concern with larger, aggressive chewers—dogs that "chew to destroy." Always observe your dog when it is chewing the Easy Brush, and immediately take it away if it becomes damaged.

What if my dog doesn't chew it?

Most dogs will chew the Easy Brush without training. Some dogs immediately start chewing, but typically the first time a dog is given the Easy Brush, it will lick the outside of the brushes trying to get at the toothpaste, then finally settle down and begin chewing. Some dogs require some training, and some dogs simply do not chew much. If your dog does not chew on the device, try coaxing it by "playing tug" (dogs will often guard and chew the brush after this, and tugging alone does some brushing), or press some of your dog's favorite treat (for example, peanut butter) into the bristles. Be sure to praise your dog for using the brush. Usually only one or two "training" sessions are required before your dog will use it on its own. Be sure to take the Easy Brush away after a couple minutes of actual chewing time; this reinforces the Easy Brush as a "treat" for your dog.

What if my dog "eats" plastic chew bones?

Many dogs that destroy plastic chew bones can use the Easy Brush according to label directions without problems; but large, aggressive chewers may be able to damage the Easy Brush. Always observe your dog when it is using the Easy Brush, and remove it immediately if it becomes damaged.

What if I see blood on the brush?

Dogs, especially "aggressive chewers," often will bleed a little from their gums when chewing on rawhide chews, bones, and harder chew toys. However, excessive bleeding when using the product could be a sign of gum disease (gingivitis) or irritation from excessive use. Reduce chewing time if excessive bleeding is noticed. If bleeding persists, discontinue use and consult your veterinarian.

Should I still have my vet clean my dog's teeth?

Yes. Even though you brush your teeth, you should still have your teeth cleaned at regular intervals by a dental hygienist. Dogs are no different; the Easy Brush is an excellent way to help keep your dog's teeth clean between visits to the veterinarian, but is not meant to replace regular veterinary dental cleaning.

What about pregnant or nursing dogs?

The Easy Brush can be used with pregnant or lactating dogs.

When should I replace the Easy Brush?

Replace the Easy Brush if it becomes damaged, or when the bristles begin to wear excessively.

What is the Easy Brush made of?

The easy brush is made of a hard polypropylene core encased in rubbery polyurethane. The bristles are polypropylene. Unlike with normal toothbrushes, the Easy Brush bristles are individually fused to the base by a special process that attaches each bristle separately, so that as the brush wears "bunches" of bristles do not fail together. In normal toothbrushes, bunches of bristles are literally stapled into holes in the base and once a bristle is removed from a bunch, the rest of the bristles in that bunch come out easier.