Lake Pine Animal Hospital
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Early Dental Care for Puppies

> **Dental care should begin early – even before all adult teeth are in. Starting young helps your puppy become comfortable with oral handling and significantly reduces the risk of dental disease later in life.**

Why Start Early?

By age three, most dogs show signs of dental disease. Early prevention helps avoid pain, infection, tooth loss, and long-term health complications.

How to Introduce Dental Care

Start slowly and keep sessions short and positive.

- Say "Teeth" before handling the mouth.
- Begin by gently lifting the lips for 1-2 seconds.
- Gradually touch teeth and gums with your finger.
- Reward calm behavior with praise or a small treat.
- Practice a few seconds daily before progressing.

Step 1: Dental Wipes

- Begin with dental wipes before introducing a toothbrush. We recommend Dechra dental wipes or similar veterinary-approved products.
- Gently wipe outer tooth surfaces.
- Focus on back teeth where plaque accumulates.
- Perform once daily if possible.

Step 2: Toothbrushing

Once your puppy accepts wipes comfortably, introduce brushing.

- Use a small finger brush or soft brush that fits comfortably in your hand.
- Use dog-approved toothpaste only (never human toothpaste).
- Brush outer surfaces using small circular motions.
- Aim for daily brushing for best results.

Start with 10-15 seconds and increase gradually.

How Often?

Daily care is ideal. If daily brushing is not possible, aim for at least 3-4 times per week.

After Adult Teeth Erupt

- Once your puppy has full adult teeth (typically around 6 months):
- Continue regular brushing or wipes.
- Add a nightly veterinary-approved dental chew.
- Consider a plaque-prevention powder added to food as recommended.
- Dental chews and powders support brushing but do not replace it.

Important Tips

- Keep sessions calm and positive.
- Never force the mouth open.
- Stop if your puppy becomes stressed and try again later.
- Bring questions to your puppy visits – we are happy to demonstrate.

Consistent early dental care builds lifelong habits and protects your puppy's health. Lake Pine Animal Hospital is here to support your pet's oral health at every stage.