

The Importance of NAIL CARE FOR YOUR DOG

Keeping your dog's nails trimmed is an important part of dog care. Nails typically need to be trimmed every 2-4 weeks. A lot depends on how fast they grow, how long they are, and their activity level. If you let your dog's nails grow too long, they can cause what's known as a "splayed foot." A splayed foot can cause traction problems, change the way they bear weight, and potentially damage the foot.

Some people choose to use clippers, others use a grinding tool made for dog's nails. Some choose to do it themselves, while others prefer to take them to the vet or groomer. Dog's paws and toes are very sensitive, so depending on your pet, they may find that the act of having their paws held and touched is uncomfortable. Spending some time touching and holding your dog's paws when you are petting them or playing with them, especially starting when they are a puppy, can go a long way to helping them feel comfortable when it comes time to clip their nails.

Learning some basic skills about how to use clippers or a grinder is very important and there are many good articles and videos to show you how. Going slowly and taking your time are very important, as well as providing a lot of positive feedback and treats so they associate their nail trims with a positive experience. If you are using clippers, keeping a styptic pencil or powder on hand is a good idea in case you accidentally hit the dog's quick (which is a blood vessel in the nail which can be very painful if cut), to help stop the bleeding.

The Importance of DENTAL CARE FOR YOUR DOG

Keeping your dog's teeth clean and healthy is one of the most overlooked aspects of dog care. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, 80% of dogs show signs of canine periodontal disease as early as age three.

Just as you brush your teeth daily, it is recommended that you also brush your dog's teeth daily, or at a minimum of three times per week.

Getting your dog used to having their teeth brushed may take a little time and patience but having a dog that is willing to let you put your fingers in its mouth can go a long way. The earlier you can start making your dog comfortable by having its mouth/teeth looked at, the better.

Aside from cleaning your dog's teeth, there may be times when your dog puts something in its mouth that you need to attempt to remove, or if you need to check if there has been an injury to the mouth, gums or teeth, or having the vet do an exam. All these situations are much easier and safer to deal with when your dog is comfortable having its mouth and teeth touched.

Buy a Dog Toothbrush and Dog Toothpaste:

Dog toothbrushes are available at pet stores or online pet supply outlets. Specifically designed dog toothbrushes with angled handles, soft bristles, and even multiple heads make reaching all the tiny nooks and crevices inside your dog's mouth easier and quicker. You will need a toothpaste specifically formulated for use by dogs, as human toothpaste contains toxic ingredients like xylitol and fluoride that could cause significant harm. Dog toothpaste comes in many appealing flavors like peanut butter, beef, and chicken. Try different combinations of toothpaste and toothbrushes to see what your dog likes best.

Choose a good time and place to brush your dog's teeth. Start slowly:

First just use your finger to move over your dog's teeth and lift the gums and practice moving around its mouth. Then try the same thing with just the toothbrush. Then try a little toothpaste on your finger. Then try the toothpaste on the brush. Having their teeth brushed may feel unnatural to a dog, so don't rush. It may take some time to work through their whole mouth. Use lots of positive reinforcement and even treats if needed.

Consult with your veterinarian as to when it may be time for a professional cleaning:

This can be done by your vet or a canine dentist. Some dogs can go for a few years between cleanings, while others need their teeth cleaned every 6 months to 1 year. A lot depends on the dog's breed and if their teeth are being brushed regularly. Your vet is also a good resource for information about the proper way to brush your dog's teeth, and there are many articles and videos online.