

How to Train Your Cat to Tolerate Teeth Brushing

Objective: to have fun and to be “in” your cat’s mouth on a regular basis so you can identify issues as they arise

Supplies

CET toothpaste (or other accepted pet toothpaste)
CET mini finger brush, cat tooth brush, or small gauze squares (takes place of toothbrush in week 4 – see below)



Tips

- To desensitize your cat from having “things” near his or her mouth, whenever you pet your cat, make an effort to rub around your cat’s face and even try to gently put your finger up under the lips
- Train your cat around the same time every day, for example, before you go to bed
- Give your cat a very small yummy treat before or after the training or if your cat doesn’t like treats, play with your cat or brush your cat (do something your cat LOVES doing) before and after training
- If your cat is resistant to any part of the training, stop when the resistance starts and try again the next day
- When brushing your cat’s teeth, only brush the outsides (don’t try to brush the sides of the teeth closest to the tongue)
- Avoid approaching your cat from the front with the toothbrush. Most cats will back up when approached from the front – try to brush the teeth from the side or from behind your cat’s head.

Week 1

With your cat on your lap or sitting next to you on a chair or couch:

- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on your finger and have your cat lick the toothpaste off your finger
- Do this once a day for 1 week

Week 2

With your cat on your lap or sitting next to you on a chair or couch:

- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on your finger and have your cat lick the toothpaste off your finger
- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on the toothbrush and allow your cat to lick the toothpaste off the toothbrush
- Do this once a day for 1 week

Week 3

With your cat on your lap or sitting next to you on a chair or couch:

- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on your finger and have your cat lick the toothpaste off your finger
- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on the toothbrush and allow your cat to lick the toothpaste off the toothbrush
- Rub your cat’s face and get your finger up under the gums
- Do this once a day for 1 week

Week 4

With your cat on your lap or sitting next to you on a chair or couch:

- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on your finger and have your cat lick the toothpaste off your finger
- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on the toothbrush and allow your cat to lick the toothpaste off the toothbrush
- Rub your cat’s face and get your finger up under the gums
- Place a small amount of CET toothpaste on the toothbrush (or gauze square) and brush your cat’s teeth with a back and forth motion
- Do this once daily to help keep your cat’s teeth healthy

Cornell University has a different teeth brushing training program that may work better for you and your cat. Please visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAImhEg_5bo for the video.

*** If you are unable to brush your cat’s teeth with a back and forth motion, it is fine to allow your cat to chew on a larger head toothbrush to get some brushing action.