



## Fido Files: Does Kibble Really Clean Teeth?

Dental problems and gum disease are a serious problem for an estimated 50-85% of America's dogs and cats. Ian Billinghurst DVM in his book "Give Your Dog A Bone" says that untreated mouth infections can spread via the blood stream and may lodge in other organs such as the heart, lungs kidneys etc.

It is a fact that animals who eat raw food that is rich in minerals, vitamins, enzymes and a "bounty of nutrition" as it is found in nature are unlikely to have receding, inflamed, swollen and bleeding gums.

Martin Goldstein DVM strongly believes that wet commercial foods and even kibble provide NO work out for the teeth. They form a kind of glue that adheres to the teeth contributing to dental decay. Don Hamilton DVM feels that the key to superior dental health is a healthy immune system from a healthy diet, avoiding stresses that compromise the immune system such as vaccinations, drugs etc.

### Bad Breath

There is more to bad breath than problems with the teeth. Poor diet leads to foul breath-it festers in the intestines and the stink of it backs up.

Gingivitis is an inflammation of the gums usually caused by a bacterial infection.

Periodontal disease is the most common tooth and gum problem and results from "a change in the normal saliva" which then creates a build up of calcium salts, food, hair and bacteria on the teeth. These deposits put pressure on the gums causing inflammation, swelling and receding gums. Dr Pitcairn continues on that with out proper nutrition the gums cannot repair themselves or maintain necessary resilience.

### Feeding Raw Bones

Billinghurst writes that dogs are scavengers and for millions of years have cleaned up the remains of other dog's bodies in the form of bones. He continues on that "a dog's whole system is designed for and needs raw bones to function properly"! They are necessary regardless of the age and breed of animal.

Raw bones are living tissue composed of living cells therefore they are a complex source of a wide variety of nutrients (vitamins, minerals, amino acids (protein), essential fats, anti-oxidants and enzymes. Billinghurst feels that if feeding raw bones (not cooked or smoked), there is no need for a mineral supplement. The only nutrients missing in a raw bone are some of the b vitamins and the amino acid methionine (found in abundance in raw food or a raw meaty bone).



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Cats and Kittens also need to chew to keep their mouth healthy. They can munch on chicken necks, tripe cubes, vegetables... In "The New Natural Cat" Anitra Frasier gives a list of "acceptable crunchies" for cats.

Many people do not feed raw bones because "it is messy". Or - because their vet does not approve! But, dogs can easily be trained to chew in one spot and canine teeth are designed to gnaw on raw bones. Their incisors are designed to rip flesh.

### Suggestions for Animals with Bad Teeth/Gums

- A healthy, natural raw food diet is paramount to healthy gums and teeth.
- Calcium and other minerals are essential to the health of teeth and bones these can be found in a raw bone.
- Vitamin C is known for its ability to improve gum health and it improves the assimilation of essential minerals.
- Apple cider vinegar improves digestion, which therefore supports health in the mouth.
- Anti-microbial herbs may help kill or control bacteria. Such as colloidal silver, Echinacea and grapefruit seed extract.
- All of the green grasses e.g. barley and wheat help improve diseased gums.
- To help remove bacteria, plaque and tartar already present on teeth, try a product like LEBA 3, or Petzlife. These products are simply sprayed in the animal's mouth and Voila!

*Written by Tamara Low*

### A Word about Prescription "Dental Diets" from Dr. Corinne Chapman DVM of Rocky Ridge Vet Care

"The addition of chemicals to pet food to 'Whiten and brighten' teeth is taking pet care a step in the ridiculous direction! Raw natural bone is the only historically-proven tool to remove tartar and keep teeth 'their whitest'. Period.

Pet dental diets do not cut through already-present tartar in my experience. Better yet, these dental kibbles actually stick to the gums and teeth and may even promote tartar! I have yet to have a patient, including my own pets, that has benefited from a dental diet.

The only way to keep tartar off your pet's teeth is to let them do it naturally with raw meaty bones! They get many benefits, not only fresh breath and clean teeth, but the endorphin release from chewing bones can calm and relax your pet. Anal gland problems in dogs are often reduced with raw poultry (chicken backs, necks, and turkey necks). The list goes on!"



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*The information in this article should in no way replace regular veterinary care from a qualified Holistic Veterinarian.*

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