

How to Combat 5 Common Dental Myths

Myths surrounding pet dental health can make pet owners skeptical of the veterinary team's recommendations. Mary L. Berg, BS, LATG, RVT, VTS (Dentistry), offers talking points veterinary technicians can use to combat common dental myths. Scan the QR code below to watch the full Vet2Vet Tech Takeover conversation between Mary and Sam Sacasa, CVT.

MYTH 1

Dogs and cats don't feel pain from dental disease.

Talking points: Dogs and cats hide pain, but there are subtle clues that pet owners can detect. Dropping food, chewing on one side of the mouth or hissing at the water bowl indicate oral pain. Dental pain often develops gradually, so pets have time to adapt and pet owners are less likely to notice.

MYTH 2

Bones, chew toys and tennis balls will help keep my pet's mouth healthy.

Talking points: Dogs bite straight down and the shearing forces of hard objects can fracture their teeth. Safe chew toys give enough to bend in your hands or be depressed by a fingernail. Tennis balls are also unsafe because of their abrasive nature.

MYTH 3

Toothbrushing is too difficult and it doesn't help anyway.

Talking points: Most pets will accept brushing after an acclimation period. Dental wipes are an acceptable alternative to brushing. Ensure older pets undergo a professional cleaning and exam to address painful teeth before starting a home care regimen.

MYTH 4

Feeding hard kibble will keep my pet's teeth clean.

Talking points: Most pets swallow their kibble whole. When pets do chew their kibble, the food crumbles apart and doesn't scrub the teeth. Dental diets are designed with a spongy matrix texture and special enzymes that clean the teeth with mechanical action.

MYTH 5

Bad breath is normal in pets.

Talking points: Bad breath is caused by thiols produced by harmful oral bacteria and periodontal infections. Routine oral home care and professional dental cleanings can reduce oral bacterial numbers and eliminate bad breath.



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