



Pet Owners Doing More For Pets' Teeth

(NAPSA)—Pet owners have become increasingly aware of the importance of pet oral health and its effect on whole-body health and well-being. While daily tooth-brushing is the gold standard in oral care for pets as it is for humans, less than 1 percent of dog owners are compliant.

Instead, many turn to treats with dental benefits, known for being more enjoyable for pets and most convenient for owners.

A new study shows that 77 percent of dog owners gave treats they believed to provide oral care benefits last year, with 30 percent increasing such treat giving. Yet up to 60 percent of them don't realize that their dogs may have progressing oral disease. Part of the problem is lack of veterinary care. Also, most treats that claim to clean teeth lack the research to prove it.

"Veterinary dentists only trust a fraction of treats to be effective at cleaning teeth and safely protecting them," says Dr. Jan Bellows, veterinary dentist, diplomate and incoming president of the American Veterinary Dental College. According to Dr. Bellows, it's important for pet owners to understand which dental treats work effectively to eliminate plaque and tartar buildup and are safe for pet teeth. "Some dental treats, especially real bones, are notorious for their low nutritional value and their hard textures, which can contribute to tooth fractures," Dr. Bellows says.

Many consumers are accustomed to seeking out toothbrushes and toothpaste that carry the American Dental Association (ADA) seal of approval. And dental standards are equally as important for pets and their oral health.



Veterinary dentists say only certain treats should be trusted to promote oral care.

Fortunately, there's a governing body that confirms if dental treats work, using third-party testing. The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) is similar in nature to the ADA but is applied to pet products.

Through stringent research and review, the VOHC determines which products on the market are effective. Greenies® Canine Dental Chews was the first brand of dental treats to receive the seal for plaque and tartar control and has been a pioneer in dental treats that meet VOHC standards.

"Walk into any pet store and you will find dozens of treats that claim to clean teeth," Dr. Bellows says. "While it's easy to make teeth-cleaning claims, formulating a treat that significantly protects teeth is difficult. The VOHC seal is there to help veterinarians and pet owners recognize which products are proven to work."

For more information about the Veterinary Oral Health Council, visit www.vohc.org. For further pet dental chews information, visit www.greenies.com.