



Caring for Your Cat's Oral Health: Do the Flip Lip Test



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How do you give your cat a mouth exam to check on their teeth, tongue and gums? With just a flip of their lip (on a regular basis), you can check for warning signs and help keep them at their best!

Here's how to do a flip lip test and stay on top of your cat's oral health in seven simple steps:



Step 1: Remember daily dental care.

The flip lip test is important, but so is a daily oral care routine! Regular care like brushing their teeth and adding a [FELINE GREENIES™ Dental Treat](#) to their daily routine can help keep their teeth clean and reduce tartar (and help keep bad cat breath at bay).

Daily care won't replace your regular at-home lip flip tests or professional cleanings at the vet, but it is a great way to maintain their dental health.



Step 2: Choose a calm time.

Plenty of people get tense just thinking about going to the dentist, so it's easy to understand how a cat could feel agitated about a human pawing around in their mouth. Pick a time of day to do the exam when your cat is already calm, relaxed and receptive to having you in their space. Steer clear of playtime or just before or after feeding time — those activities might get your cat overly excited or protective.

Step 3: Get comfortable together.

Settle into a comfortable position with your cat facing you, perhaps even having them sit in your lap. It's important that you are close enough to examine them carefully and that they're not inclined to jump away. Calming them down with a little extra affection and reassurance is a great idea too!

Step 4: Examine your cat's face.

- While looking at your cat's face, feel along their upper and lower jaw for signs of abnormalities, discomfort or swelling.
- Check for any eye or nasal discharge.
- Examine the outside of their lips, looking for signs of swelling or inflammation.



Step 5: Inspect your cat's mouth.

- Gently flip your cat's lips up to examine their mouth and teeth.
- Check the front and back of their teeth for plaque and look for signs of tooth decay like bad breath or yellow-brown crust (tartar) along the gumline. Pay particular attention to the upper back teeth (molars), as they're often prone to plaque and tartar build-up.
- Examine the gums for redness, inflammation or a yellowish appearance.
- Check the tongue for symmetry and any breaks in the surface.

Step 6: Reward your cat.

After completing the exam, reward your cat with praise or a healthy treat like [GREENIES™ SMARTBITES™](#) in their favorite flavor. It's important that they feel good about the experience and know the exam is a safe, nonthreatening process. Leaving the lip flip test with a good taste in their mouth is a good way to help make each exam a little more expected and comfortable (for you both)!



Step 7: Follow up on your concerns.

If you spot any troubling signs while examining your cat's mouth, it's a good idea to follow up with your vet. Always consult your veterinarian if your cat has sensitivity around their mouth, difficulty chewing or eating, bad breath, red or swollen gums, discolored teeth or other abnormalities.

A daily dental routine plus regular flip lip exams is a great combination for supporting your cat's oral health and catching feline oral health problems early.

Of course, only a trained veterinarian or technician will be able to catch all possible oral-health issues and order X-rays and professional cleanings as needed. Schedule semi-annual veterinary oral exams for your cat. Vet visits are also a great time to ask about pet foods that might be right for your cat; ask them which food and treats have dental benefits for your cat's health (and enjoyment).

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