How GREENIES™ Dental Treats Support Canine Dental Health
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The Importance of Canine Dental Health

Dental health is one of the most important, yet often overlooked, aspects of a dog's overall wellbeing. Just like humans, dogs rely on healthy teeth and gums not only for chewing and eating but for supporting their broader health. Poor oral care can lead to pain, infections, and even systemic diseases(open in new tab) that affect major organs. The science is clear: preventive dental care in dogs is essential, and daily interventions such as properly formulated dental chews can play a vital role.

Among the leaders in canine dental science, the team at Mars Petcare, working closely with the Waltham Petcare Science Institute, has devoted decades to understanding oral health in pets and creating safe, effective tools to support oral health. One such tool is

GREENIES™ Canine Dental Treats; a product supported by extensive research, meticulous safety testing, and years of refinement to ensure both efficacy and safety as an alternative to toothbrushing, which is considered the gold standard.

This article draws from an in-depth interview with three experts in the field: **Anna Alexander**, an animal scientist, former veterinary nurse and RSPCA(open in new tab) inspector, and Mars product safety specialist with 25 years in care and treats; **Dr. Rebecca Wright**, a biologist and the Global Health and Well-Being Science Technical Leader in oral care with a PhD in cellular and molecular biology; and **Dr. Jessica Gilliam**, a veterinarian with over 14 years of practice, including leadership roles at Banfield Pet Hospital(open in new tab). Their combined expertise offers a rare, behind-the-scenes look at why dental health matters for dogs, and how GREENIES™ support it.

Why Canine Dental Health Matters

According to Dr. Jessica Gilliam, oral health is not just a cosmetic concern:

The mouth contains millions of bacteria. Not only do these bacteria produce smelly compounds and cause bad breath, the bacteria can travel through other parts of the body including the liver, heart and kidney and cause illness as well.

Dental disease in dogs often starts with plaque, a sticky film that accumulates within hours after eating. If not removed, plaque hardens into tartar within a few days, leading to gum inflammation (gingivitis) and, eventually, periodontal disease. Dr. Rebecca Wright notes:

“Plaque builds up within a couple of hours, tartar builds up within a couple of days, and dogs can get gum disease within two to three weeks… Sporadic [dental care] doesn’t have much benefit… daily intervention is much more effective(open in new tab).”

If left untreated. periodontal disease is not only painful, sometimes leading to tooth root abscesses and extractions, but research has shown it impacts a dog’s quality of life. Dr. Wright references Waltham studies(open in new tab) proving that “dogs with poor oral health have a reduced quality of life,” affecting not just their physical comfort but their overall wellbeing.

The Science Behind GREENIES™ Dental Treats

GREENIES™ treats are carefully engineered to hit the “sweet spot” in texture, shape, and size for optimal dental cleaning. As Dr. Wright explains, “There’s a real fine balance in texture—not too hard, not too soft. When the tooth penetrates, it scrapes along the side to physically remove plaque.”

This ideal texture comes from a precise formulation using wheat flour, wheat gluten, and glycerin—a plant-based compound that acts as a plasticizer to give the treat the perfect flexibility for cleaning teeth. Some pet owners raise concerns about glycerin, assuming it contains sugar and could contribute to dental problems—similar to how sugar feeds cavity-causing bacteria in humans. Alexander addresses this directly: “Our glycerin is sugar-free. And unlike humans, dogs rarely suffer from tooth decay (caries)(open in new tab) in the same way, so glycerin poses no such risk. "It would no more build up plaque or tartar than anything else a dog eats... [and] all of our dental care products have no added sugars.”

The texture is essential because GREENIES™ work through mechanical cleaning—similar to

the bristles of a toothbrush—to help prevent plaque and tartar buildup when fed daily. Their unique design also encourages chewing rather than swallowing whole, enhancing both cleaning action and safety.

The Risk Behind Hard Treats & Chews

Many pet parents believe that giving their dog hard chews like antlers, plastic toys and other treat options are beneficial for their teeth. While there may be plaque reduction from that chewing action, hard chews also carry significant risk(open in new tab):

“Products that are too hard can increase the risk of tooth fracture,” Dr. Wright cautions. “Antlers [can] break a tooth(open in new tab) because they are so hard.”

Alexander further explains, “You see slab fractures from too hard a product because… [dog] enamel isn't as strong as our teeth, so if they chew on something at the wrong angle, they can break their tooth.”

A fractured tooth is not only painful but may require extraction, further diminishing quality of life. The challenge is finding a chew that is firm enough to remove plaque through mechanical action, but not so hard that it risks breaking teeth.

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The Role of the Microbiome

Another important aspect of oral health is maintaining a balanced microbiome (community of bacteria in the mouth). Wiping out all bacteria, as some antiseptic products do, can disrupt the delicate balance of the oral microbiome, which could be detrimental. Dr. Wright explains:

“You want… good bacteria… out competing with the bad bacteria. Once the pathogenic bacteria have the environment to thrive… that’s what causes the problems.”

GREENIES™ support healthy oral conditions through mechanical cleaning and maintains the balance of a healthy oral microbiome.

GREENIES™ in the Broader Dental Care Routine

While brushing is the gold standard, just as with humans, most pet owners do not brush their dog’s teeth daily. Dr. Gilliam acknowledges this reality:

“Ideally [you’d be] brushing your dog’s teeth every single day. Who has time for that? Most people don’t… [so] besides brushing, dental chews [are] that next step.”

Daily GREENIES™ Dental Treats, when combined with regular veterinary checkups and professional cleanings, form a practical and effective routine for many dog owners.

Safety and Digestibility

When Mars acquired GREENIES™ in 2006, the global pet scientists & R&D teams prioritized implementing rigorous digestive solubility testing and formulation shifts to ensure safety and efficacy of the dental treats.

Alexander, one of the lead scientists on developing and implementing the digestive solubility testing, explains, “We create an artificial dog’s stomach and an artificial dog’s small intestine… [The product] has to break down and… pass through the dog without causing any gastric upset.” She adds, “GREENIES™ has been through this test methodology… It has to break down and when we look at the filtrate at the end …basically a thin layer that shows that it's broken down.” All products that go through this test have to meet a threshold before they are deemed safe for dogs to consume.

Another concern for pet parents when choosing a dental chew product is choking risk. Mars addresses this issue through structured risk assessments. Products are tested for size appropriateness, texture, and shape to minimize risk. She emphasizes that feeding the correct size chew for a dog’s weight is crucial: “Another concern about choking is when you feed the wrong size product to the wrong size dog… a small product to a large dog that thinks it can swallow it whole.”

Not all commercially available chews meet the same safety standards, but at Mars no care or treat product, including GREENIES™, reaches the market unless it passes these tests and standards.

Commitment to Science, Transparency, and Industry Standards

Mars Petcare doesn’t just use its research for product development; it shares findings with competitors, veterinary bodies, and regulatory agencies to raise industry standards. Wright notes their work on hardness limits for chews:

“We’ve gone out to various regulatory bodies globally… showed them the research… and made the lab methodology available externally… [The goal is] making it really available to people”

Similarly, Alexander is working on an improved artificial digestion system that could become an industry benchmark, just as their tooth fracture standard already has.

Conclusion

Canine dental health is a critical pillar of preventive care that directly affects a dog’s comfort and quality of life. The science shows that daily mechanical cleaning is key, and while toothbrushing is most effective, properly designed dental chews like GREENIES™ Dental Treats offer a safe, practical, and enjoyable alternative for dogs and owners alike.

Backed by decades of research, rigorous safety testing, and an unwavering commitment to improving standards across the industry, GREENIES™ Dental Treats stand as a trusted tool for maintaining a healthy canine smile and supporting a healthier, happier life for our dogs.

As Dr. Gilliam reminds us, “Dental care is one of the top pillars you should be discussing at every veterinary visit.” With the right tools, including proven options like GREENIES™ Dental Treats, pet parents can make daily dental care a reality.

FAQs

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1. **Why should I choose GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats?**

   Your dog will love eating GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats, and you'll love giving them our dental chews because you know that it will help to keep them happy and healthy. But don't just take our word for it. GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats are accepted by the Veterinary Oral Health Council to help control tartar buildup for better oral and whole-body canine health.
   Our Dog Dental Treats also adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), the leading standards in the pet food industry, for natural ingredients.
   GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats are a choice both you and your dog can feel good about!

2. **What GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treat flavors are available?**

   We understand that all of the health benefits of GREENIES™ Dental Treats won't do any good if your dog doesn't think it's a real treat to eat them. That's why we made sure that they taste great!
   GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats come in several flavors: Original, Fresh (with natural spearmint), Sweet Potato, and Blueberry, plus Pumpkin Spice, ScaryBerry, and Gingerbread in our seasonal bundles. You're sure to find an option that appeals to even the pickiest of pups.

3. **Do GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats have other health benefits?**

   Yes! GREENIES™ Dog Dental Treats are beneficial for better breath and oral health, and they're also a good way for pet parents to promote better whole-body health for their beloved pups.
   In addition to improving oral health, our dental chews offer other benefits as well. For example, the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients in our treats offer a balanced adult recipe for healthy treating to help support overall better health and well-being.

4. **How often should I give my dog GREENIES™ Dental Treats?**

   We recommend giving your dog one GREENIES™ Dental Treat per day.
   We offer GREENIES™ Dental Treats in a variety of flavors for dogs of all sizes, and we have Dental Treats for puppies (over 6 months old) specially formulated to promote brain development with DHA and strong teeth and jaws with calcium.
   Picking the appropriate dental chews for your dog and giving one treat per day can help maintain your pet's oral health as part of a good dental hygiene regimen with regular veterinary exams and cleanings.

5. **Why does my dog have bad breath?**

   Although bad dog breath is sometimes caused by something your dog ate — like roadkill, garbage, or poop — even dogs with impeccable eating habits can have bad breath. It's often the result of the plaque that builds up on your dog's teeth.
   If it isn't removed, this plaque can then turn into calculus (also known as tartar), which

contains harmful bacteria. Besides giving your dog stinky breath, tartar can lead to more serious oral health problems like gingivitis or periodontitis.

6. **Can dental treats improve my dog’s breath?**

   Yes, feeding your best friend GREENIES™ dental treats can have a positive impact on bad dog breath. In fact, GREENIES™ got its start with ordinary pet owners who wanted to do something about their dog’s stinky breath.
   All of our flavors can help with bad breath, but our Fresh flavor dental chews in particular are specially formulated with spearmint to spare your nose when you’re getting dog kisses.
   By reducing tartar buildup with GREENIES™ Dental Treats in-between regular dental cleanings from your vet, you can noticeably reduce your dog’s bad breath and help to reduce the chances of your pet developing oral health problems.

7. **What are dog dental treats and chews?**

   GREENIES™ Dental Treats are dog snacks with a purpose. Besides being a delicious reward your dog deserves just for being a good boy or good girl, our treats are designed to improve dog dental hygiene by cleaning your dog’s teeth as they chew. By giving your dog GREENIES™ dental chews every day, you can help to support their oral and overall health. GREENIES™ Dental Treats are an easy way to love and care for your best friend.

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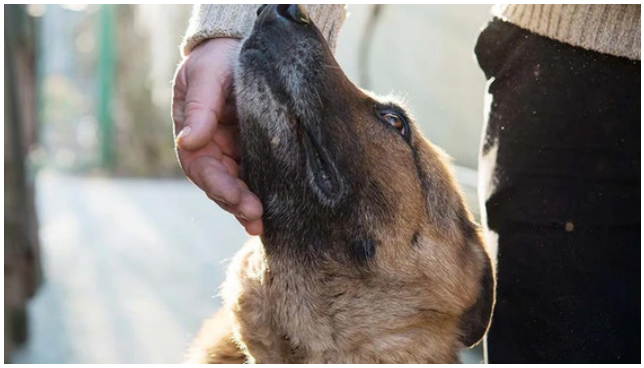
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Caring for your Pet’s Health with GREENIES™ Treats

At the GREENIES™ Brand, we believe treats should not just taste good, but they should do good. Here are few things to keep in mind when buying a dental treat or chew. Try to avoid hard chews, bones or rawhides that might damage teeth. Look for a dental dog chew that is flexible, easy to chew and digestible like GREENIE

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