

## Ferret's Gums Bleed After Brushing

**Is it normal for a ferret's gums to bleed after brushing if it has gingivitis?**

*By Karen Rosenthal, DVM, DABVP*

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**Q:** I have a ferret that is about 2 years old. I recently took her to the vet because she had been vomiting. Although everything seemed OK, the vet said she had bad gingivitis. I was told to brush her teeth. I bought toothpaste for kittens and the toothbrush, but I notice that when I brush her teeth, no matter how gently, her gums start bleeding. Should I be concerned, or is it simply from the gingivitis? Will brushing her teeth get rid of the gingivitis? How often should I brush her teeth?

**A:** I would suggest returning to the veterinarian's office to show your doctor exactly what is happening. First, the technique you use to brush your ferret's teeth might need to be modified until the gingivitis subsides. It is important for your vet to see your technique to make sure that the brushing is not causing any damage.

Next, I would be concerned about the extent of your ferret's gingivitis. If the gingivitis is associated with dental tartar, then brushing alone will not treat the gingivitis. If this is the case, then your ferret requires a dental procedure by your vet that removes the tartar from its teeth while your ferret is under anesthesia.

The tartar is not only on the section of the teeth that you can see but also the tooth part that is below the gums. This can lead to gingivitis. No matter how long or how hard you brush, the tartar below the gum line will not go away until it is physically removed during a dental procedure. Afterward, with appropriate brushing, the gingivitis might start to subside.

So, at this point, you need to revisit your vet, make sure that dental tartar is not causing a problem and then start brushing again.

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