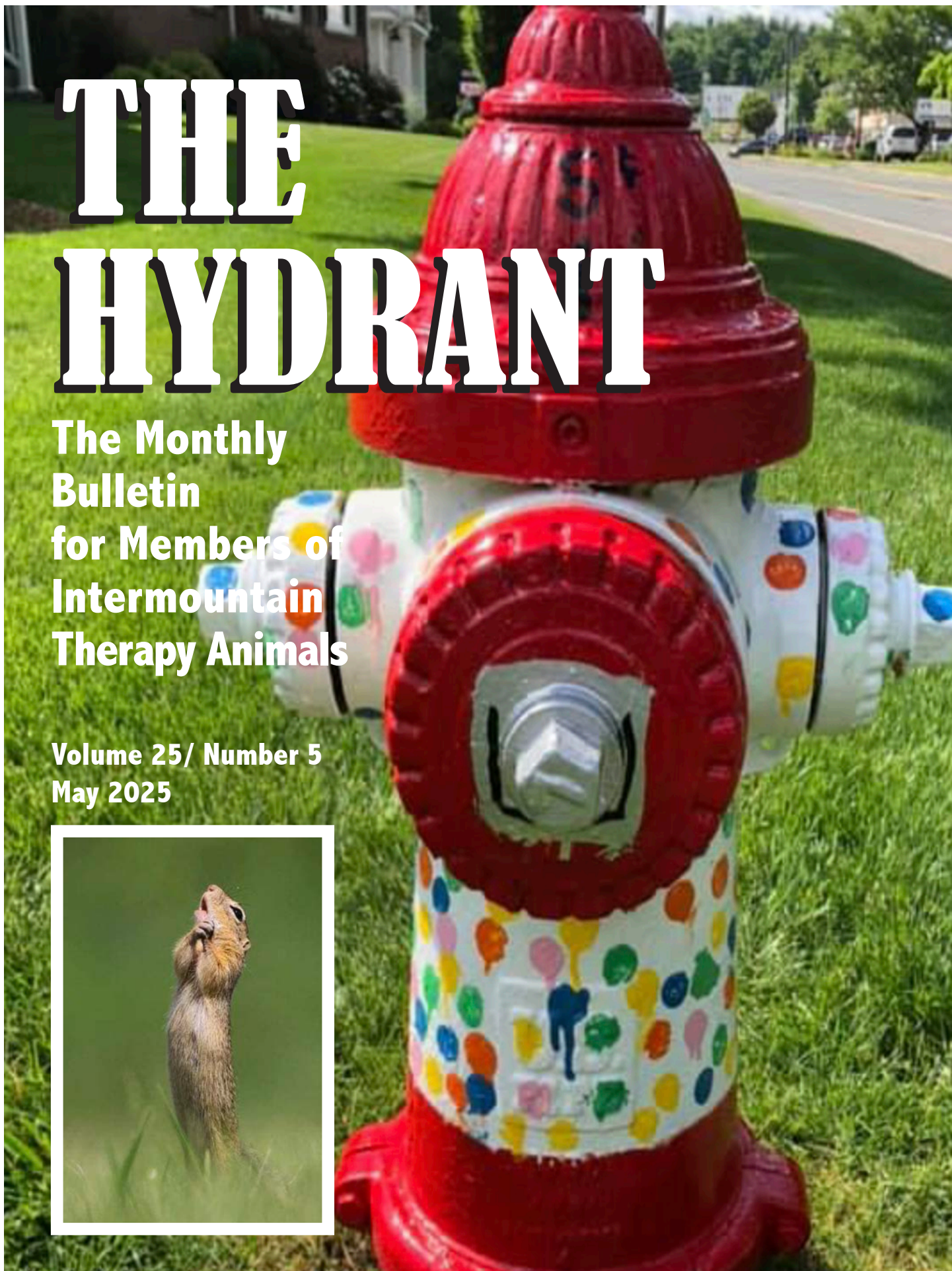


THE HYDRANT

**The Monthly
Bulletin
for Members of
Intermountain
Therapy Animals**

**Volume 25/ Number 5
May 2025**



Are you current with ITA?

Membership Dues:

Individual \$99
Family \$150

How to Pay:

Pay online at therapyanimals.org/ita-members-only/
OR call the office with a credit card (801-272-3439),
request a PayPal invoice, or send a check to
PO Box 17201, SLC, UT 84117

Update your Contact Information:

If your contact info remains the same, you can simply make your payment. If any of your contact info has changed, please let us know by responding to this email or you can use the membership renewal application on our website (using the link above).

If you are not planning on renewing your membership, please let us know so that we don't send more notices.

ITA Normal Office Hours:
Monday ~ Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm
(Fridays - CLOSED)



COMFORT, HOPE, HEALING AND LOVE - SINCE 1993
INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS

OUT & ABOUT!



Our Southern Utah chapter attended the Autism Walk event on April 12th. Shown above with big smiles all around are (from left) Tami Brown & Troy, Candice Rogers & Arlo, and Julie Stephenson & Annie.



Fitz, partner of Tegan Tingley, gets acquainted with a new friend at St. Joseph's Villa in Salt Lake.

JOINING OUR BOARD



Kate Bjordahl (& Pepper)

(Park City, UT)

We are pleased to welcome Kate to our ITA Board of Directors! She started her term in April.

Kate is a veterinarian who owned the Powder Paws clinic in Park City until December of 2022, when she chose to retire to have more time for her son and daughter, as well as have some new experiences. She is off to Africa this summer to learn how to de-horn rhinoceroses (to avoid their deaths by poaching the horns).

We are thrilled to have her join our board!



Service Opportunities ~ ITAVOLUNTEERS.COM

Stop by the office anytime to claim your very own refrigerator magnet to remind you where to search for ITA service opportunities!



HELP !!

We've crunched the numbers again and discovered that still only **21%** of our dedicated volunteers consistently report their hours every month (with approximately 50% providing updates sporadically).

Reporting your hours is crucial for ITA, and here's why:

Justification (and Gratitude) to our Supporters: We are fortunate to have the support of foundations, grants, and individuals who are genuinely interested in the impact of their contributions. Reporting your hours allows us to showcase how their funds are advancing our mission, quantify the hours dedicated to our communities, and demonstrate the tangible difference made in countless lives through our services. Their continued support is vital for the sustainability of our organization.

Strategic Planning for Visits: Knowing who is actively engaged, and where, helps us respond effectively to special requests for visits to specific locations. By having accurate and up-to-date information, we can make informed decisions and efficiently connect the right volunteers with specific needs.

Commitment to Your Volunteer Agreement: Reporting hours is not just a request but a commitment you made when you signed your Volunteer Job Description during orientation. This agreement, documented in your manual (around page 225), is a cornerstone of our volunteer program, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Your dedication to reporting hours not only strengthens our organization but also contributes to the transparency, efficiency, and impact of our collective efforts. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to ITA's mission. THANK YOU!!



RETIRING



Mary Carlson & Milo

(Springville, UT)

It is with some sadness that Mary Carlson has determined that it is time for her and Milo (Springville, UT) to retire from ITA.

They were a team since February 2023.

Mary sends sincere thanks for the education and support!



Wynston, partner of Ruthanne Weis

(Bigfork, MT)

Wynston is getting older and gave indication that he was ready to retire. We are grateful to Ruthanne & Wynston for their more than 10 years of service with ITA.

Ellen Folke, ITA member, evaluator, instructor and former partner with Benno, has written a beautiful article about their therapy experiences in The Alpenhorn magazine. We are including the full article for your reading pleasure at the end of this issue of The Hydrant.



NEW TEAMS



Diane Brace & Katie

(St. George, UT)

Welcome back, Diane! She's been an ITA member since April 2001 with several of her fabulous golden retrievers!



Ann McLuckie & Suzie Q

(St. George, UT)



Julie Stephenson & Annie

(St. George, UT)

Julie is also back with a new partner in Annie—yay!



LEAVING EARTH

This has been an especially heartbreaking month for losses of beloved ITA animals, all of which were sudden and shocking.



Zee, partner of Craig Dunford

(Salt Lake City)

Craig told us, “On April 10, Zee went to the dentist and didn’t make it! Her big heart just stopped. Best dog we’ve ever had. And a superb therapy animal. That is thanks to ITA.

“We loved our experience with our visits: St. Marks, Shriners, SLC airport, and a couple of visits to U of U, not to mention to the ITA office.

Not sure how we will move on. We will just see what time has for us without Zee.” Craig & Zee were an ITA team from November 2018 until October 2023.



Billy, partner of Holly Shick

(Colorado Springs, Colorado)

Billy was almost 10 years old. He and Holly joined ITA in 2018, and have worked together ever since, even when they moved to Colorado for Holly’s job. She told us, “My sweet Billy died on Easter morning. He had a tumor that ruptured, and I did not know about it until it was too late. I’m devastated. We both loved ITA, and without him, I would have never been able to do this kind of work.”



Lola, partner of Rachel Sipos

(Logan, Utah)

Rachel told us, “It’s with great sadness that I report that Lola has crossed the rainbow bridge at just 8 years old. There’s an entire hospital up here in Logan that is in tears with me.

“She was rushed into the Sunset ER at 2:30 am after whining, crying and throwing up. They did bloodwork and x-rays and discovered a mass. Next they did CT scans and found there was a mass on her adrenal gland the size of her kidney, and also masses in her heart and lungs and wrapped around

the vena cava and aorta. My options were take her home and see how long she lives, or put her to sleep while she’s still under anesthesia. I chose to let her be humanely euthanized while under anesthesia, without ever having to wake up and feel more pain. She passed away in my arms surrounded by those who love her. ITA was a huge part of her life. She LOVED going to the hospital and meeting new people. She would basically pull me in the front door!”

Rachel & Lola have been a team since April 2022.



SHARING APPRECIATION!

April 10, 2025

Dear Kirsten & Pippi, Jamie & Stu, and Tera,

Our students had the best time yesterday meeting the amazing therapy dogs from Intermountain Therapy Animals, Pippi and Stu! Thank you all so much for making this special experience happen.

The visit created such a joyful buzz throughout the school, and the students are now even more excited to collect books for our book drive.

Tera, I can't thank you enough for all the coordination it took to bring this visit to life—you truly went above and beyond.

Kirsten and Jamie, thank you both for helping create such a meaningful and memorable moment for our school community. My own daughter, who tends to get nervous around dogs, has been asking when she'll get to see Pippi and Stu again!

We're all looking forward to collecting as many books as we can to support the R.E.A.D. program.

Shahara Crani

On behalf of all of us at Blooming Minds Montessori



Kirsten Nilsson & Pippi



Jamie Uncapher & Stu

Exemplary Service at University Hospital

We got this news from University of Utah Hospital regarding all those who have donated more than 750 hours as volunteers there, and four of our veteran teams made the list:

Susan Daynes — 5,537

Peggy Chudd — 4,851

Lynne Hansen — 1,083

Preston Chiaro — 981

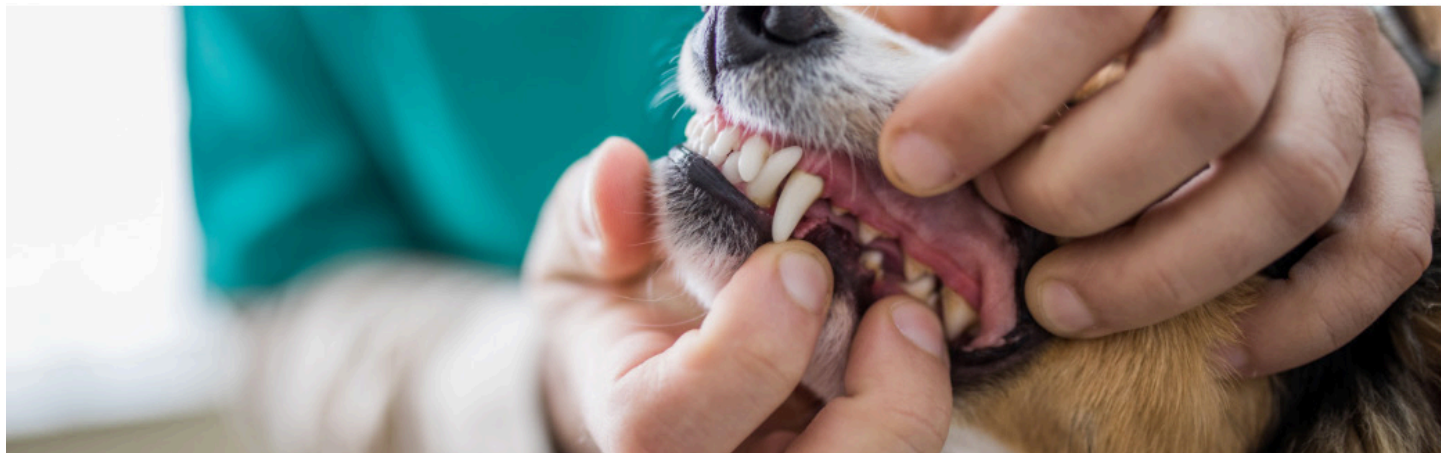
Patrick Becker, the Volunteer Services Supervisor, says, “This is a huge achievement and we want to recognize their dedication to enhancing the patient experience. Each of these volunteers will receive a certificate and a special gift to show our appreciation. Thank you for all you do, we are excited to be able to help recognize your efforts as a dedicated volunteer.”

We add our congratulations and appreciation! (- ITA Staff)



Health Care for our Animals

One of the biggest challenges for those of us with companion animals is how to manage their dental health. A recent article in the *Whole Dog Journal* (“Periodontal Disease,” September 2024) stated emphatically that we really ought to plan our budgets to include a full dental cleaning for every one of our critters **every single year**. It’s so important that I asked our consulting vet, Katie Domann, DVM, to write a detailed article for us to outline what we need to do and *why* it’s so important. (–KK)



Canine Dental Care

Katie Domann, DVM

We all know the importance of our oral hygiene, and many of us visit the dentist every 6-12 months for a thorough oral exam, x-rays and teeth cleanings. Oftentimes the dentist is able to identify a problem we did not know we had, and it can be addressed before it becomes a bigger issue.

Taking care of your dog’s teeth is just as important, as dental issues can lead to a number of health problems if left untreated. Just as in our mouths, your dog’s mouth hosts a diverse ecosystem of bacteria. When oral hygiene is neglected, bacteria thrive and lead to plaque formation. When plaque hardens, or calcifies, it creates tartar. Once tartar builds up on the tooth surface it is difficult to remove and creates a place for more bacteria to grow. Plaque and tartar can lead to periodontal disease, gum recession, tooth abscesses, tooth decay and of course bad breath!

The last thing we want when our dog is visiting is for them to have bad breath!

Untreated dental issues cause pain and discom-

fort and often result in the loss of teeth. Bacteria involved in dental disease can spread to the liver, kidneys and heart, resulting in life threatening conditions.

You have probably heard the term “periodontal disease” used at some point, either with regard to you or your dog. What is periodontal disease, exactly?

It is a condition that affects the tissues that surround the teeth: gums, ligaments and bones. It is caused by the buildup of plaque and tartar on the teeth which can lead to infection and inflammation.

There are several stages of periodontal disease, and unfortunately, once you can detect a bad odor from your dog’s mouth, the changes may be irreversible.

The good news is that in the early stage periodontal disease *is* reversible; in this stage there is only inflammation of the gum tissue, also called the gingiva.

Some breeds of dogs have a unique oral

(Continued next page)



Dental Health Care for Our Animals (cont.)

shape or size that makes them especially prone to dental disease.

Brachycephalic dogs (i.e. dogs with a shortened muzzle and flat face, such as pugs, bulldogs and shih tzus) often have crowding and rotated teeth which can lead to advanced periodontal disease. Additionally, they may have unerupted teeth which can later result in oral cysts. These can only be detected with oral radiographs under anesthesia.

Poodles and doodles are predisposed to “linguoversion” or inverted canines where the lower canine teeth are angled inward, which causes them to make contact with the upper palate causing pain and eventual erosion of hard palate tissue, if not treated.

Early identification and intervention of these and other congenital conditions is very important in the prevention of oral pain and secondary complications.

Broken or fractured teeth are another common issue in dogs; they may be caused by external trauma (like being hit by a car) or chewing on hard objects such as antlers, bones or other hard, non-bending chew toys. Fractured teeth range from uncomplicated and superficial to complicated and involving the root. The severity will dictate the necessary treatment. Symptoms of a broken tooth include chewing on one side, excessive drooling, pawing at the mouth, facial swelling and refusal to chew on treats or toys. Often, there are no signs at all as dogs are experts at hiding pain.

Because so many oral issues in dogs are not obvious or easy to see, having a complete oral exam done by your veterinarian is very important. It should be part of your dog’s annual wellness exam, or more urgently if you suspect there is a problem based upon the above signs you have observed in

your dog.

What follows next is known as a “COHAT,” which stands for Complete Oral Health Assessment and Treatment. The initial phase begins with a complete visual examination of the face, mouth, and each tooth. Frequently a dog will have several different problems that need care. If a problem is suspected based upon initial examination, general anesthesia will be recommended for a proper tooth-by-tooth evaluation.

This next step is what often is of the greatest concern to dog owners. The idea of general anesthesia makes people nervous and uncomfortable. Under the correct protocols, however, anesthesia is very safe and is far less dangerous than the periodontal disease that will develop without proper cleanings.

There are a number of questions that you can and should ask your veterinarian before proceeding with the anesthetic component of the oral health assessment and treatment.

☐ ***Do you perform laboratory work for my pet prior to anesthesia?***

- Lab work is recommended (regardless of your dog’s age) to evaluate organ function prior to anesthesia.

☐ ***Who administers and monitors my dog while she is under anesthesia?***

- Confirm that your dog will be monitored under anesthesia by a trained veterinary technician who monitors blood pressure, blood oxygen saturation, electrocardiogram, respiratory rate and body temperature. Intravenous fluids should be administered throughout the procedure to help maintain your pet’s blood pressure and provide intravenous access for additional drugs if they are needed. Warming blankets should be used to keep your dog warm during the procedure.

(Continued next page)



Dental Health Care for Our Animals (cont.)

☐ *Do you take radiographs as a standard practice for all cleanings?*

- Comprehensive veterinary dental cleaning will include radiographs. This is the only way to identify other painful problems that may exist in your pet's mouth under the gum, in the bone or involving the tooth root due to periodontal or endodontic disease.

The below graphic illustrates something that is often discussed when it comes to canine dental disease. The part of the tooth that we can see is just the “tip of the iceberg;” most dental disease takes place below the gumline. This is why radiographs are critical for making an appropriate diagnosis and treatment plan.



☐ *Do you use localized nerve blocks?*

- Local nerve blocks, in addition to pain medication administered prior to anesthesia, reduce the amount of general anesthetic needed, improving the safety of the procedure and making your pet's recovery faster and less painful.

☐ *What is your protocol if you identify a problem?*

- Ask your veterinarian how they handle disease that they find and if they will discuss the findings and treatment options with you immediately. You may also want to ask how they handle any complex issues they find, such as broken teeth, bone loss or other problems. In many cases a specialist can save teeth with root canal proce-

dures as opposed to extraction—keeping teeth intact when possible can prevent future dental problems. Bear in mind that if your dog is having an anesthetic oral assessment, you will need to be available during that entire time for your veterinarian to call and discuss treatment options. This may dictate the date you decide to proceed with the treatment.

Your veterinarian should be happy to discuss every step of the process with you.

Here is a link to the American Veterinary Medical Association, which provides nice synopses of both home care and the cleaning procedure:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/pet-dental-care>

Canine dental health is a crucial yet often overlooked aspect of a dog's overall well-being. Regular dental care, including professional cleanings and at-home maintenance, helps prevent painful conditions like periodontal disease, tooth loss, and serious systemic health issues.

Stay tuned . . . in next month's Hydrant I will discuss both anesthesia-free cleaning procedure and things you can do at home to keep your dog's teeth and mouth as healthy as possible. I'll include recommendations for chews and other products. ❤

