



# Pet Smile Month Promotion Guide



## **Introduction:**

Pet Smile Month is targeting the national and regional press - however it is incredibly hard to get stories across. The most effective publicity will always come from your own efforts locally. The local press and radio are usually keen to feature a story with a local angle. Over-page is a draft Press Release - please feel free to adapt this, personalising it to your practice, feature your patients that have benefitted from dental treatment, quote your clients' endorsement of the improvements they have seen. PR is a massive subject - this short guide is simply designed to help towards developing your own strategies. For more information the BVA regularly runs media training courses for its members - these are invaluable and come highly recommended.

## **Identify your Local Press and Media:**

Make a list of your local newspapers - don't forget the free-sheets as well. List your local radio and regional TV offices. Try and find out the names of the local reporters assigned to your area. Think laterally - which large local employers have an notice-board (electronic or physical) where local events can be displayed, which schools have a newsletter or bulletin board that might be interested, which Parish magazines might be anxious for a space filler?

## **Prepare Your Message:**

We have included a general Press Release for you to use. You can also download this from the Vet Area of the Pet Smile Month website and edit it as you wish. Remember to include your own practice details and contacts. Try to give a local slant to the press release. Think about what your practice is doing for Pet Smile Month - is the Mayor judging your art competition, is the local high school doing a mass entry, are you providing PSM Checks for the local rescue kennel? Think about things that would make a great photo - can you train your own dog to hold the Petosan toothbrush in her mouth, will she lick the toothpaste from the tube - will she eat a Dentastix slowly enough to be photographed! Think about the sort of pictures your local paper like to print, or the "...and finally" section of your regional TV. Remember that the Pet Smile Month logo and a good selection of images can be downloaded from the PSM website Press Section.

Having a local angle, together with the national publicity, a good photo opportunity and willingness to work with the media - these are the things that will get your story out there.

## **Make Time for the Journalists:**

Journalists are professionals with very tight deadlines and high pressures to deliver. If you can make their lives easier - they will appreciate it and be more likely to give you favourable space. Inevitably they will ring in the middle of surgeries - try and ensure that your reception team are prepared for their calls. If you can't speak at the time then do return the call - or offer a mutually agreeable time to talk.

They want a good story - Pet Smile Month is a great opportunity - but if you make it difficult, they will move onto the next item on their list.

## **Don't be Disappointed:**

You can do everything right - but still get no coverage. Another story can crop up pushing you off the page, or they may wish to hold the story over to another day. Don't worry - call the journalist back and ask if they need any more information - or if there is a different angle they'd like to explore. Keep plugging away - even if the contacts don't come good for Pet Smile Month - they may be really useful another day, for another story.

## **.... and Finally...**

PLEASE do send us copies of any coverage that you receive (preferably the original - rather than just a photocopy). Also if you manage to obtain any TV or local Radio coverage can you send us a note of it (or even a tape). We are going to be keeping tabs on as much of the media as we can - however we are bound to miss some.

We would love to learn from any successes in achieving local media coverage that you may have - so we can help all of the PSM Practices for next year. In addition the information you provide will help our commercial sponsors in the promotion of Veterinary Dentistry for future years.

**Help us to help you for the future...**



# Pet Smile Month

[www.PetSmile.com](http://www.PetSmile.com)



## PRESS RELEASE

### **PET SMILE MONTH SEPTEMBER 2009 - FREE DENTAL CHECKS AT PARTICIPATING VETS**

#### September 2009 is "Pet Smile Month"

During September 2009 owners may take their pets into participating Pet Smile Month Veterinary Practices and receive a complimentary "Pet Smile Check-Up" - a free check on their pet's oral health. In addition there are special offers on dental products and they will also receive a FREE Sample of either Pedigree® Dentastix® or Whiskas® Dentabits®.

A national "Healthy Smile" Art Competition is also being held, with prizes including a flight in a Hot Air Balloon and iPod shuffles. Entries are through the local competitions held by each Pet Smile Month veterinary practice.

Vets are very worried about the state of pets' teeth in the UK. It is estimated that 80% of dogs and cats over the age of three urgently need dental treatment. Many loving pet owners do not realise the extent of their pet's disease and are unaware of the importance of tooth brushing, daily oral hygiene chews and the special dental diets which can help avoid the problems.

Dental disease is a welfare issue. "Dog's breath" is the very least of the worries. Oral pain is a feature - but often goes unnoticed because pets carry on eating. As periodontal disease progresses, bacteria spreads from the mouth through the blood stream to affect other organs such as the kidneys and heart valves. In addition little showers of bacteria are carried into the lungs with every breath.

Vets rightly regard dental disease as a whole body problem and one that needs more attention. To highlight this very serious issue they are donating their time to examine pets' mouths free of charge during September. There will also be demonstrations of tooth brushing and the use of oral chews and special diets.

Owners who wish to have a Pet Smile Check-Up for their pets should contact their own veterinary practice to see if they are a registered Pet Smile Month Practice. They can also find their nearest participating practice by using the website [www.PetSmile.org](http://www.PetSmile.org) or by contacting the help-line number 08714-24-25-26.

Pet Smile Month Veterinary Practices are running their own local art competitions, the winners will be sent onto the national competition. There are four age groups for entries (4-6, 7-10, 11-13 and 14-17 years) and entry forms are available from the practices.

For further details contact  
**Your Local  
Pet Smile Month  
Veterinary Practice**

#### **Further Press Information:**

The full colour Pet Smile Month logo and various images of dental disease and pet tooth brushing are available for download from [www.PetSmile.org](http://www.PetSmile.org). You can also contact the HQ on **08714-24-25-26**.