

Grades of Dental Disease

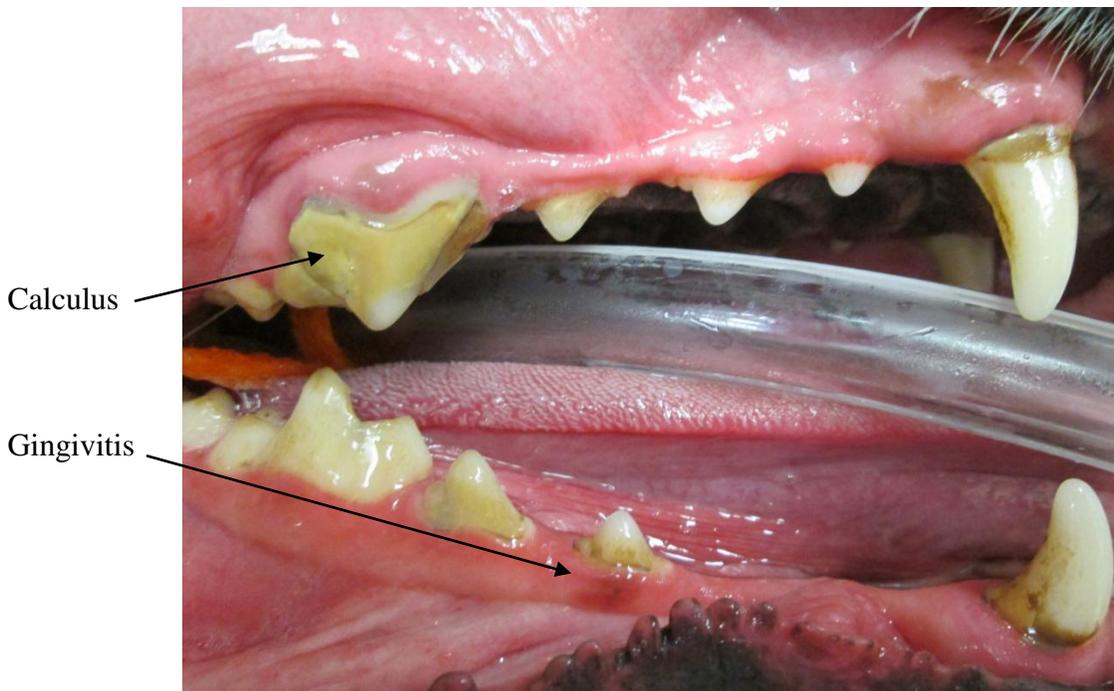
Grade 1

Very little dental calculus and gingivitis. Gingivitis is the inflammation of the gums, just above or below the teeth.



Grade 2

Moderate amount of dental calculus and gingivitis. You may start to notice a bad odor from your pet's



Grade 3

Heavy dental calculus and gingivitis. It is very likely that one to several teeth will need to be extraction due to the severity of periodontal disease. Bad breath is present.



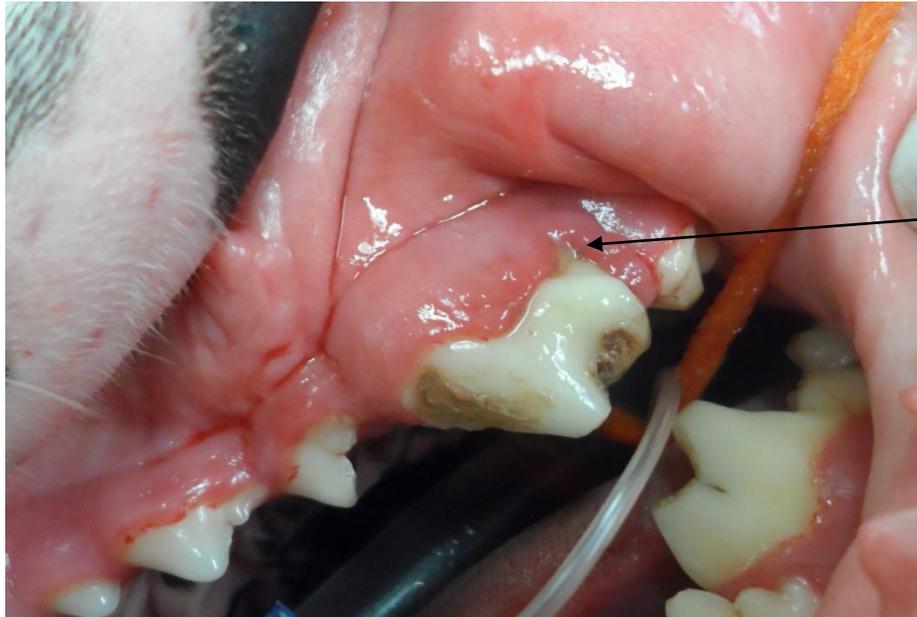
Grade 4

Severe dental calculus and gingivitis. There are multiple teeth that need to be extracted due to severe periodontal disease. There is also likely gum recession on the teeth from the disease that is present. Bad breath is obvious, and your pet may or may not have difficulty eating. Most of the teeth shown were extracted.

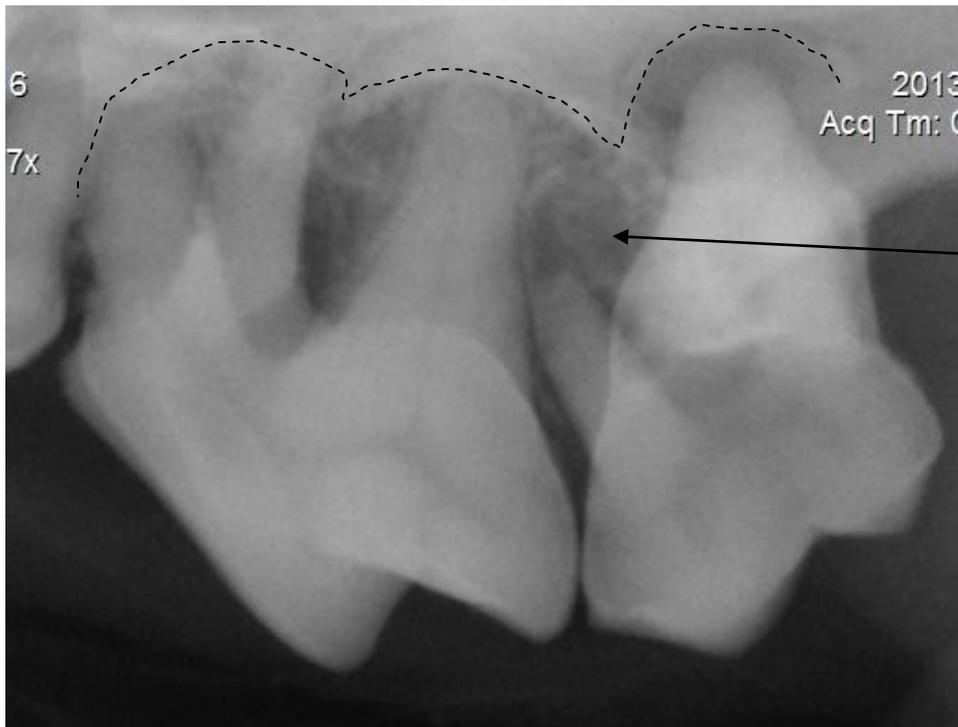


Tooth abscess

When a root of a tooth becomes infected, an abscess will form within the bone surrounding the roots. This is a very painful condition in animals and people. In some cases, pus will drain from the abscess into the animal's mouth. In other cases, a swelling will develop on the dog's face, and the abscess will rupture under the animal's eye. Removal of the tooth is the most effective method of curing abscessed teeth. Antibiotics and pain medications will frequently be prescribed prior to the dental procedure, which will temporarily reduce the infection in the mouth.



Gingival recession/
draining tract



Bone loss
caused by
abscessed teeth

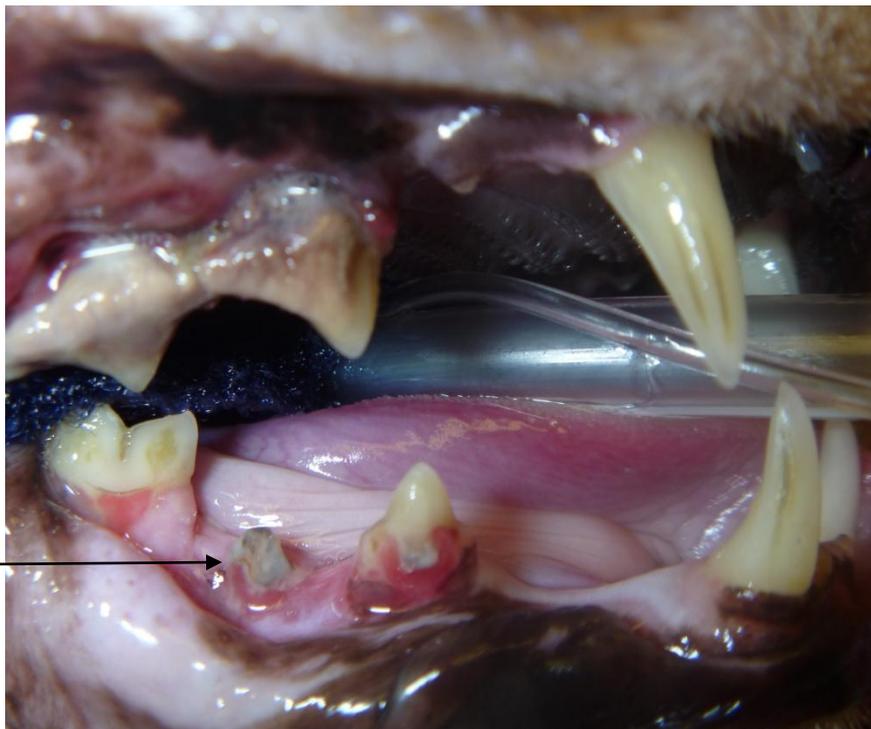
Tooth fracture

Teeth can easily become fractured, especially in those animals that enjoy chewing on hard items. Any sort of fracture to the tooth can allow bacteria to penetrate the tooth and eventually cause an infected or abscessed tooth. If only the enamel is fractured and the tooth is healthy based on examination and radiographs, a bonded sealant can be applied to the tooth to seal the enamel. If the pulp is exposed, this is a guaranteed way for this tooth to become infected. If it is infected, the tooth needs to be extracted. Alternatives are root canal and crown placement, which requires referral to a veterinary dentist.

Fractured tooth



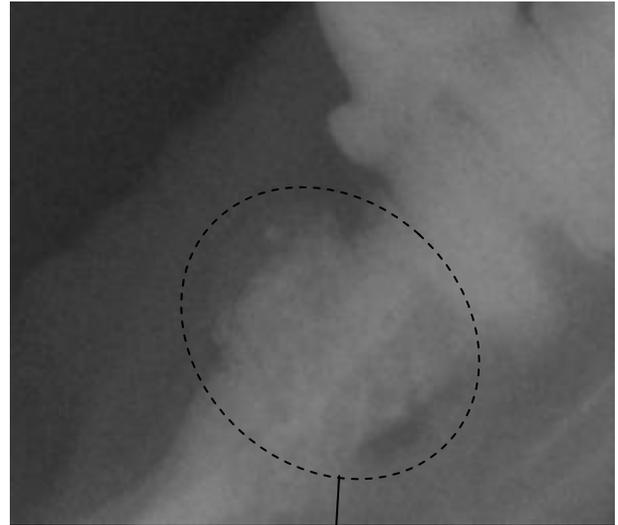
Fractured tooth



Resorptive lesion

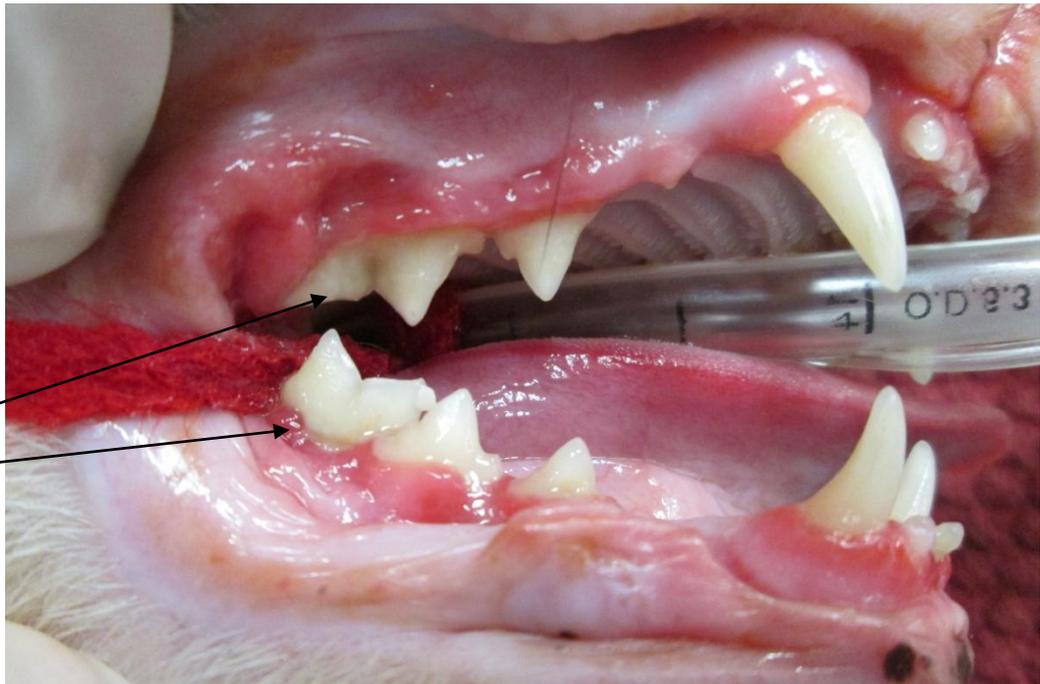
This is a lesion where the tooth breaks down from the cementum layer of the tooth. This is the layer of the tooth that holds the root to the bone. It will then progress and spread throughout the tooth, either dissolving the root or causing a weakness in the crown of the tooth (the part of the tooth you can see). These are found commonly in cats, and we are now starting to see more of these lesions in dogs. Unfortunately, the only way to cure these lesions is removal of the tooth.

Roots of teeth that are being resorbed by the body



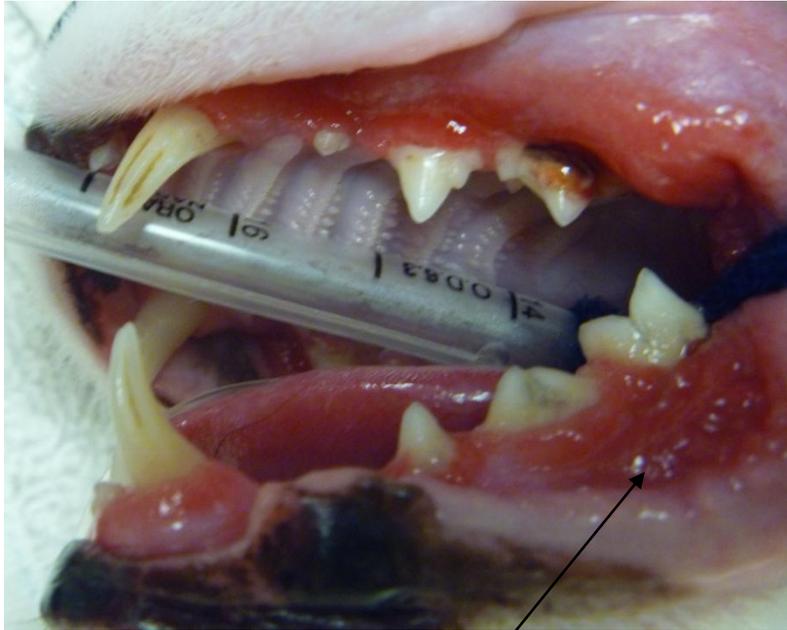
Tooth that has almost been completely resorbed

Suspected teeth with resorptive lesions

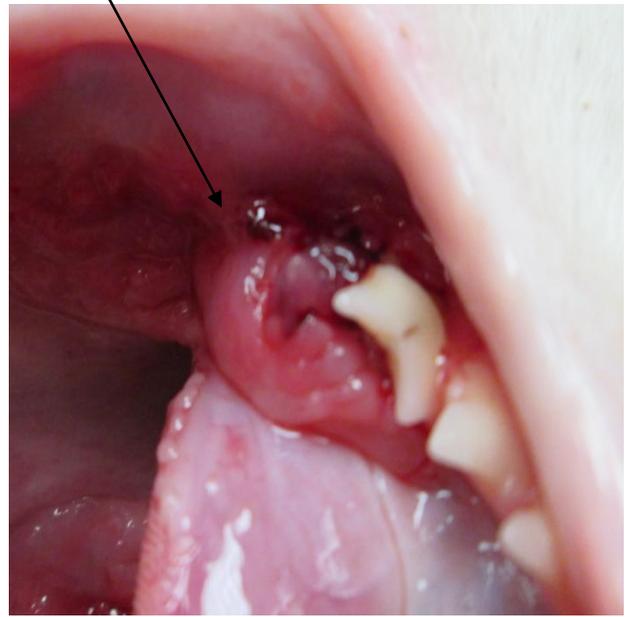
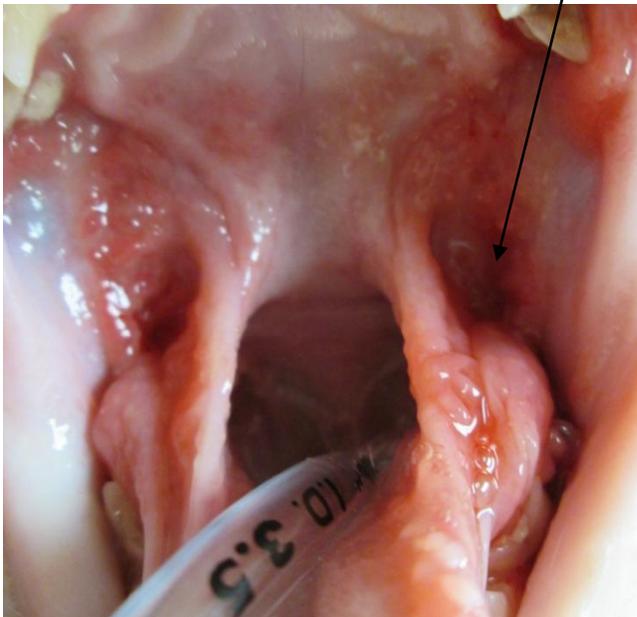


Stomatitis

This is severe inflammation of the mouth, most commonly seen in cats. These cats have very red, inflamed gums and possibly bleeding from the gums. There is also inflammation present on the tonsils, palate, and other areas of the mouth. This is very painful for cats. We can try to treat these cats with anti-inflammatory medications and antibiotics, but in most cases, extraction of the majority of the cat's teeth is the only way that we will cure this problem.

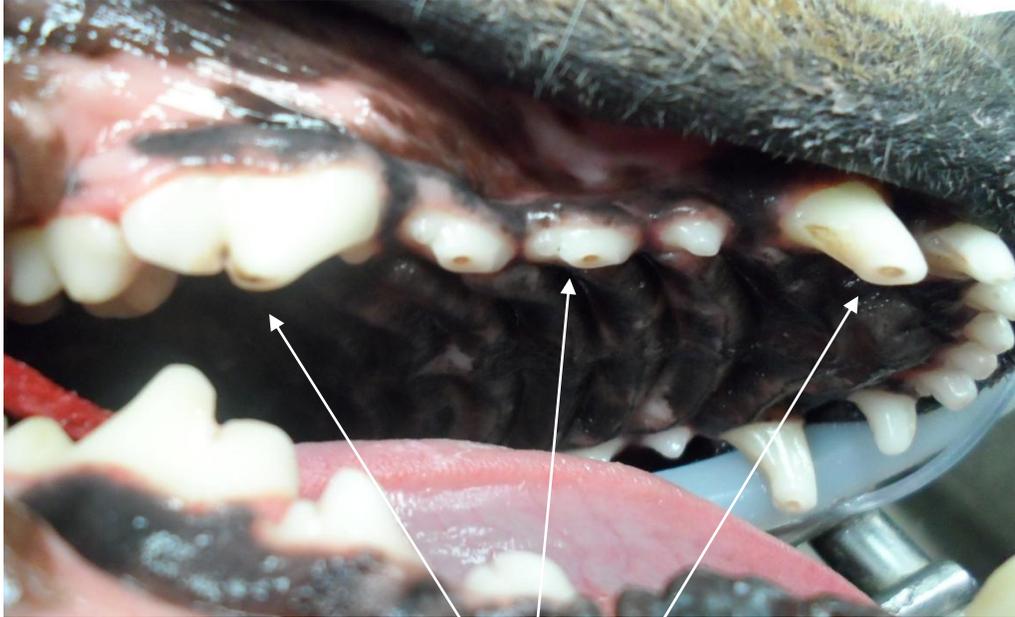


Areas of severe inflammation

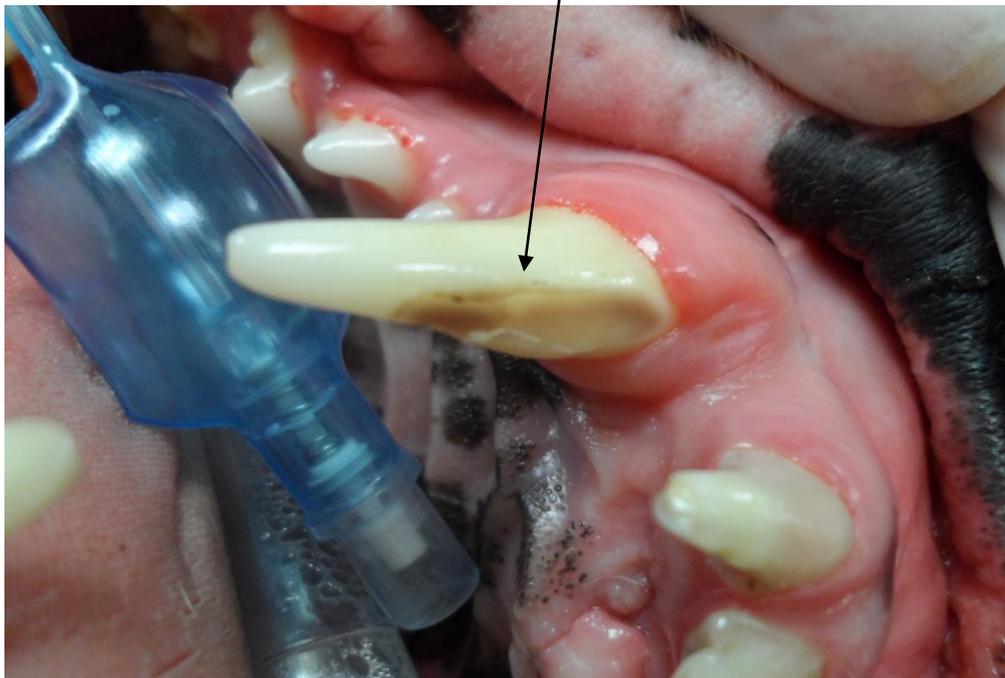


Tooth wear

Wear is very common in dogs. This is caused by chewing on hard and coarse items, such as cages, tennis balls, and even hair. Many dogs will wear the teeth down to the pulp cavity and the tooth will create a reparative dentin layer to help protect the pulp cavity of the tooth.

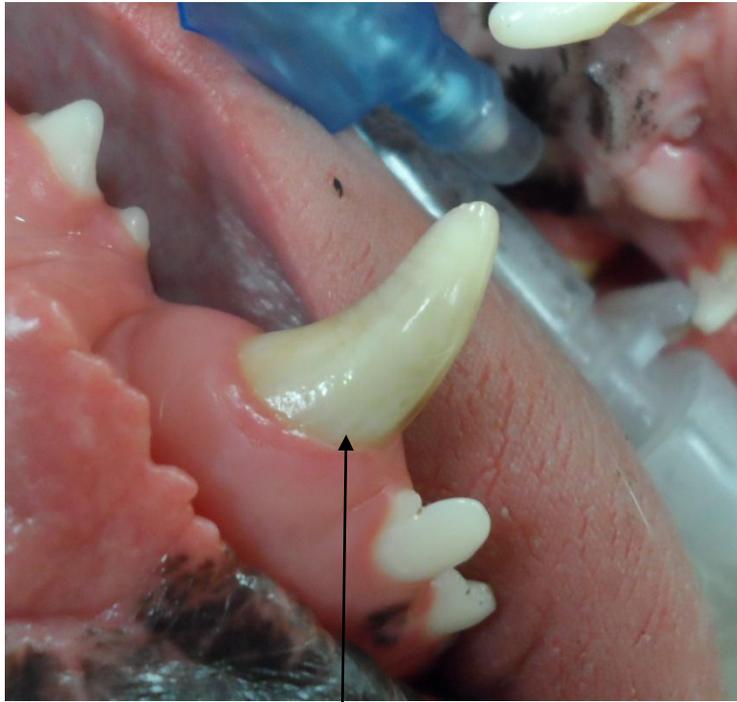


Teeth that have been worn due to playing excessively with a tennis ball and abnormal wear from the tooth below it.

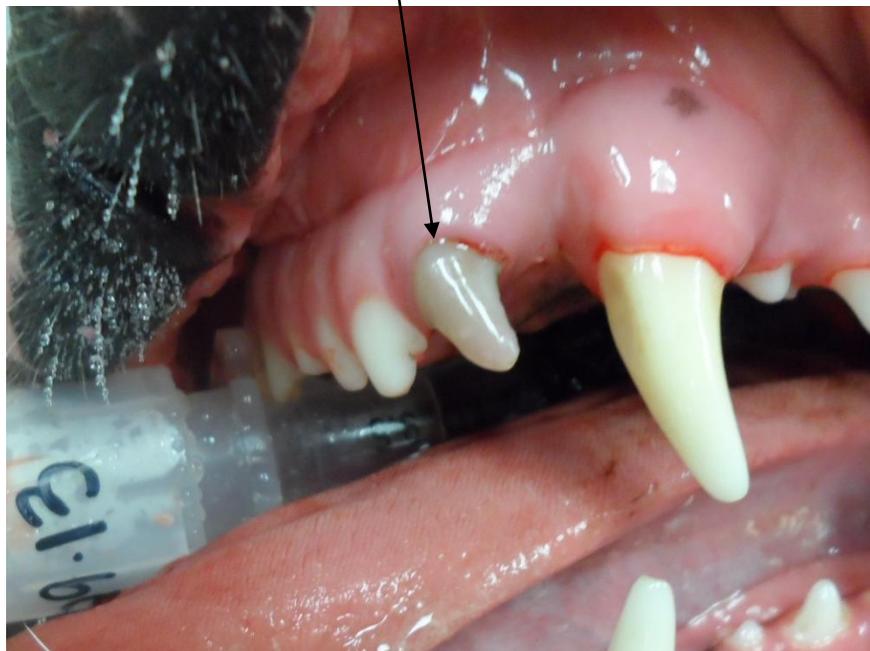


Pulpitis

Discoloration of a tooth is an indication that the tooth has become damaged, causing inflammation within the tooth. It initially turns the tooth a purple color, and then eventually the tooth will die and cause the tooth to turn to a brown-black color.



Discolored teeth secondary to pulpitis

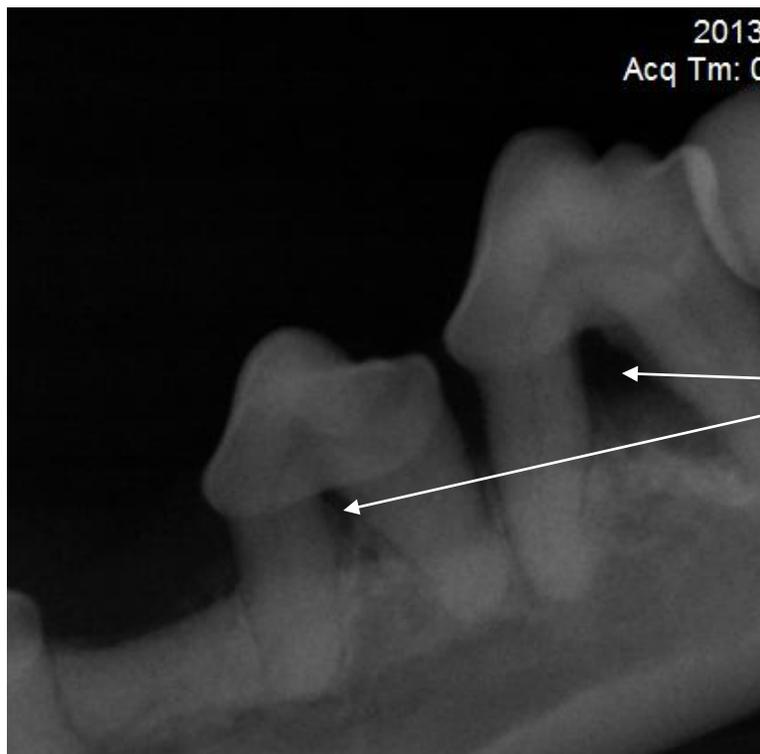


Furcation

A furcation occurs when the bone between the roots is lost due to infection. Once bone around the teeth is lost, it cannot be replaced. In severe cases, a probe can be stuck through the area where bone is lost. Unfortunately, the only way to help prevent further bone loss in this area is removal of the tooth.



Furcation (grade F3) shown with dental probe



Bone loss that causes furcation

Gingival hyperplasia

This is an overgrowth of the gum tissue surrounding the teeth. This can trap debris and bacteria around the teeth. This is a common condition seen in boxers, collies, and cocker spaniels. It can also be a side effect of some medications. Treatment is cutting back the tissue to their original levels.



Persistent deciduous teeth

These are baby teeth that haven't fallen out. All baby (deciduous) teeth should have fallen out by six months of age. In some animals, especially toy and small breed dogs, these teeth do not fall out. Leaving these teeth in the mouth will make an area for dental calculus formation and infection.

