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Root Canal Therapy in a Feline

Patient

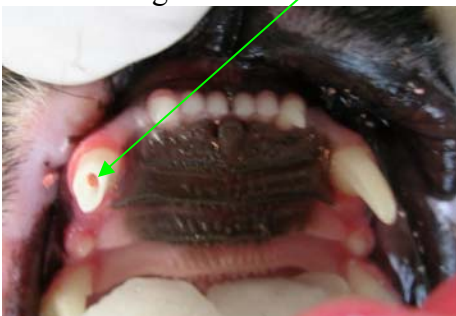
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Fractured right canine



Restored tooth



File used to clean canal



Sealed and filled canal

The most commonly fractured tooth in cats is the canine tooth. Often, just the very tip of these teeth are fractured. Unfortunately the pulp (blood supply and nerve of the tooth) extends to the tip of the canine tooth. The wait & see approach to a fractured tooth is not acceptable in that cats are designed by nature to “hide” their discomfort. Nearly all of teeth with exposed pulp are painful and most will become infected. We recommend that these patients have dental x-rays, and either root canal therapy or extraction therapy.

The goal of root canal therapy is to preserve the function of a tooth that has pulpal exposure. It involves cleaning and sterilization of the root canal using a series of files and disinfectant. This is followed by sealing the canal with a cement and inert material. Finally the fracture site and access hole(s) are restored using a composite resin material. *(The cost of root canal therapy is typically \$500-600)*

Extraction therapy is also commonly performed. This requires a mucogingival flap, surgical extraction, and tension free suturing to ensure proper healing. However, one-third of cats may develop a lip ulcer when the maxillary canine is extracted from contact of the ipsilateral mandibular canine tooth. *(typical cost for extraction therapy will range \$300-400)*