



Discolored Teeth

What is it?

Every tooth has a blood supply and a nerve in the middle of the tooth located in the pulp canal. When the pulp is diseased it is called endodontic disease. Endodontic disease is a painful condition that can lead to abscess around tooth roots, bone infection, or draining tracts.

Why do some pets get it and others don't?

Common causes of endodontic disease in dogs, cats, and ferrets include fractured teeth with and without pulp exposure. A dog that chews on sticks, rocks, or real bones is more likely to fracture a tooth. Chewing on tennis balls can wear away enamel and lead to infection and endodontic disease. Cavities and broken teeth can lead to endodontic disease. Discoloration of the tooth may be the only sign noted on exam. A study by board certified veterinary dentist, Dr. Fraser Hale, demonstrated that 92.2% of discolored teeth, regardless of the color (pink, purple, tan, grey) had dead necrotic pulps. Of those diseased teeth only 42.4% had any changes on x-rays.

How do we treat it?

Like just your teeth, your pet can benefit from dental radiographs to show the degree of endodontic disease. Treatment may involve "filling" a cavity, repairing a cracked tooth, sealing a worn tooth, a root canal or surgery to prevent further spread of infection. In cases where a fracture involves a crown and a root, extraction may be the only option to prevent further infection and pain.

How do we prevent it?

Regular veterinary exams for fractured teeth and annual dental prophylaxis care help detect fractured and discolored teeth that need endodontic treatment.