



## What is Tooth Resorption?

**Tooth resorption** is a process by which the dentin (a hard tissue that lies beneath the enamel of the tooth) in a tooth erodes and eventually becomes irreparably destroyed. Over time, all areas of an affected tooth may become involved. It is a painful condition. Even if your cat is still bright and eating well, they could be hurting.

In the past, tooth resorption was referred to as feline odontoclastic resorptive lesions.

### Causes of Tooth Resorption

We still do not know a definitive reason why some cats develop resorption and others don't. It is likely that there is an inflammatory process which triggers one form, but a lot is still unknown.

In one study, 53% of cats had an obvious tooth resorption lesion, and almost 50% of the time where no obvious lesion was noted clinically, X-rays revealed one.

### In this guide you will find:

What is Tooth Resorption?

Causes of Tooth Resorption

Types of Tooth Resorption

Identifying Tooth Resorption

Treating Tooth Resorption

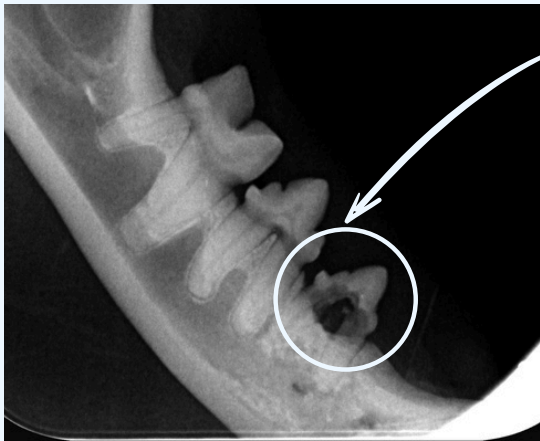
Outcomes and Summary



# TYPES OF TOOTH RESORPTION

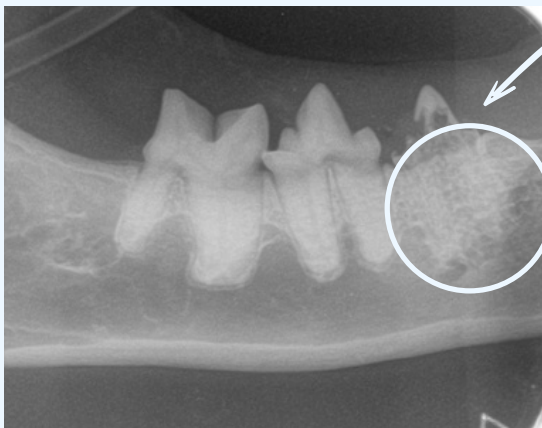
TOOTH RESORPTION IN CATS IS DIVIDED INTO SPECIFIC TYPES BASED ON THE RADIOGRAPHIC X-RAY APPEARANCE OF THE ROOT.

1



With **Type 1** tooth resorptions, there is destruction of the crown, (the tooth above the gum line) but radiographically, the root retains a normal appearance with an easily discernible periodontal ligament space.

2



With **Type 2** tooth resorptions, radiographically the root appears to be disintegrating and not easily distinguishable from the bone. This is also referred to as replacement resorption.

The cause of tooth resorption is unknown, but Type 1 has been linked to **inflammation and periodontal disease**. Regardless of cause, the outer hard tooth tissue is lost.

Type 1 and type 2 are separate conditions, type 2 does not progress from type 1—but both can occur simultaneously. Both types can **cause pain** if the nerve is affected, and damaged teeth are more **prone to fracture**.



# IDENTIFYING TOOTH RESORPTION

Once the sensitive dentin is exposed, tooth resorption is painful and manifests as **muscular spasms** or **trembling of the jaw** whenever the lesion is touched.

If your cat has tooth resorption, they may show **increased salivation, oral bleeding, or difficulty eating**. Look out for;

- **Blood on toys**
- **Decreased interest in food**
- **Slowed speed of eating**
- **Reduced interest in dried food**
- **Eating exclusively on one side of the mouth**



**WITHOUT X-RAYS IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN TYPE ONE AND TYPE TWO RESORPTION.**

Visually it may be difficult to identify at home. The images above show examples of lesions on the tooth. More clearly visible is the **inflamed, abnormal gum** surrounding the lesion. It is best to bring your cat to the vets for examination if you suspect tooth resorption.

In many cases, without anaesthetised radiographic and clinical screening, tooth resorption will go undetected and the cat will be suffering in silence.



# TREATING TOOTH RESORPTION

Treatment is guided by the radiographic appearance of the tooth resorption. Your veterinarian will obtain intraoral radiographs to assess the type of resorption.

With **Type 1** tooth resorption, both the crown and root need to be surgically extracted.

With **Type 2** tooth resorption, a technique known as crown amputation with intentional root retention is appropriate, due to the root structure being replaced by bone.

Resorption is a painful condition, which worsens with time. It is best treated early. We also know that cats who have had tooth resorption in the past, are more prone to it in the future.

X-RAY SHOWING TOOTH RESORPTION- THE CANINE TEETH SHOW ROOT DISINTEGRATION



CROWN LESION IN THE UPPER CANINE INDICATING TOOTH RESORPTION



# OUTCOMES AND SUMMARY

Treating affected teeth can really improve a cat's quality of life. Benefits include;

- Reduction in pain
- Improvement in temperament
- More comfortable eating
- Increased appetite
- More playful behaviour

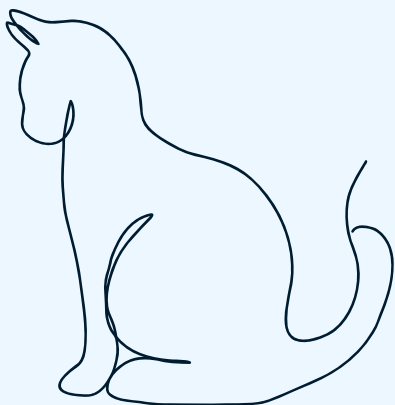


Where teeth are treated, fine dissolvable stitches are used to speed up healing. Extracting teeth and crown amputation can result in local swelling to the surgical site, which should resolve quickly. Cats will be sent home with pain killers to alleviate any post operative discomfort.

While extracting teeth may seem severe, cats are minimally impacted by the loss of a tooth and the reduction in pain is significantly more beneficial.

Ongoing care will include regular visits to your vet to closely monitor their mouths as they get older.

*Jonathan Frost*



*Thank you for reading!*



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