

## PERIAPICAL ABSCESS (TOOTH ROOT ABSCESS)

A periapical abscess is a pocket of infection that develops at the root of a tooth. This may be secondary to trauma or fracture of the crown (visible part) of the tooth. The canal of the tooth is the region where the blood and nerve is located. When a tooth is fractured, there is an opening for bacteria to invade the tooth through this canal and create infection. Ultimately, this can lead to infection and pain due to exposure of the nerve and ultimately death of the tooth canal. When a tooth is abscessed, oftentimes the best treatment option is extraction in order to relieve your pet of chronic pain and infection. In some cases, root canal therapy is also an option. Depending on the affected tooth, your pet's tooth may be surgically extracted. Prior to extraction, your pet will receive a local nerve numbing injection (dental nerve block) in order to minimize discomfort. They will be given an injection of an antibiotic prior to the extraction and they may also take antibiotics home to minimize the possibility of post-operative infection. Next the tooth is divided into its individual roots and surgically extracted. The tooth socket may also be filled with consil, a bone grafting material that may speed the re-growth of bone in that empty socket. Finally, the gums are closed to promote healing with sutures that dissolve over time. Pain will be adequately managed by giving your pet injections of anti-inflammatory medications prior to surgery and they will go home with pain medications. Depending upon the severity of your pet's dental disease, you may also need to return 2 weeks after the procedure to insure proper healing.



x-rays of teeth with abscessed tooth roots (black halos)



fractured tooth crown



fractured tooth with exposed canal (pink opening into the blood and nerve supply)

THE CAROLINAS ANIMAL HOSPITAL AND DENTAL CLINIC

