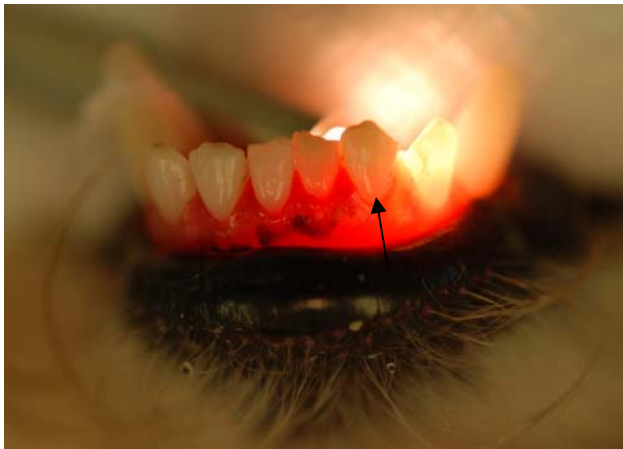


Case of the Month March 2009

A 5 yr old bichon presented for periodontal therapy. During the exam, the mandibular left 2nd incisor appeared to be slightly discolored. The tooth was not loose and no periodontal pockets were found around the tooth.



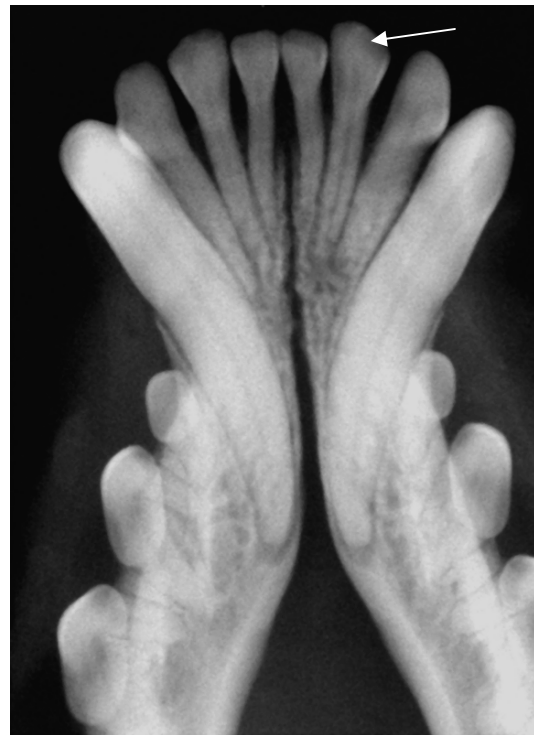
A transilluminated second incisor is dark compared to the third incisor.

A transilluminator was placed behind the discolored tooth. (A bright penlight can also be used) Notice how the light shines brightly through the third incisor, but the 2nd incisor is dark. A recent study showed that 92.2% of discolored teeth had partial or total pulp necrosis.¹

A radiograph was taken to confirm that the tooth was non-vital or dead. Often the pulp chamber will be slightly larger than it is on adjacent teeth depending on how long it has been dead. The only two options for this tooth are root canal therapy or extraction. It is important that the owner has been properly informed about the options for treatment.



The second incisor is slightly discolored.



The arrow points to the discolored tooth. Notice the slightly enlarged pulp chamber.

1. Hale F. Localized Intrinsic Staining of Teeth Due to Pulpitis and Pulp Necrosis in Dogs. *J Vet Dent* 2001; 18(1): 14-20.