

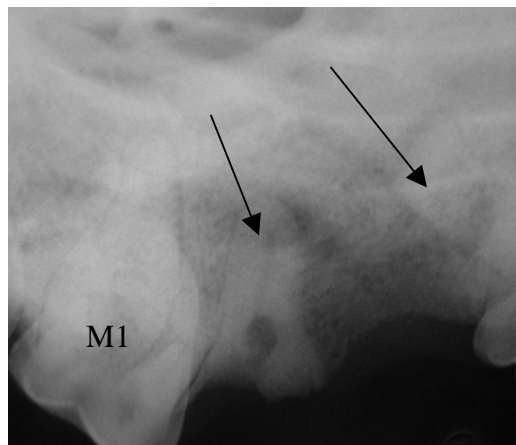
Case of the Month

History and Signalment:

A 10 yr old spayed female English Setter was referred for chronic swelling below the right eye. Both maxillary 4th premolar teeth were extracted a year earlier. During the last few months, the dog was prescribed antibiotics and/or steroids for the swelling. The swelling would resolve, but recur once the medication was stopped.

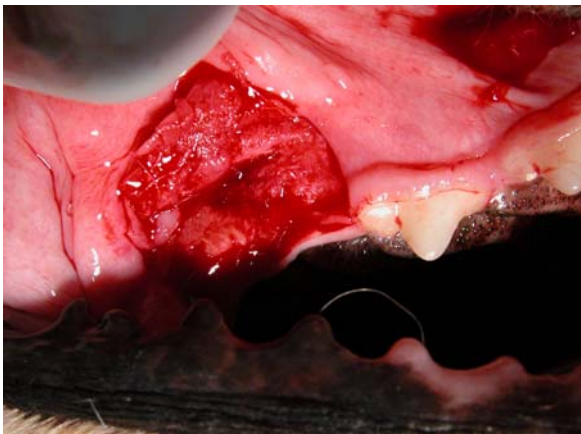
Physical Exam:

The pre-anesthetic lab work was normal. The oral exam showed mild to moderate dental calculus. The left and right maxillary 4th premolars were missing. A soft swelling was noted below the right eye. The intraoral radiographs showed two retained root tips from the right 4th premolar. The extraction site on the left was normal.



Procedure:

A surgical extraction of the retained roots was performed. A right caudal infraorbital nerve block was performed prior to the procedure. A gingival flap was created and a high-speed bur was used to expose and remove the retained root tips. The extraction site was debrided and closed with 4-0 Monocryl suture material. A post-op radiograph was taken to document complete root extraction.



Discussion:

Broken root tips are a common complication encountered during extractions. It is very important not to leave any part of the root behind. Without the proper dental equipment, retained roots can be very difficult to remove. Ideally, intraoral radiographs should be taken before and after every extraction. There are several other causes of facial swelling in dogs and cats. A dental abscess should be on the top of the list, especially if there are missing or damaged teeth. Always take a good quality intraoral dental radiograph to rule it out. Taking a skull radiograph to diagnose dental disease is usually a waste of your client's money.