

Case of the Month

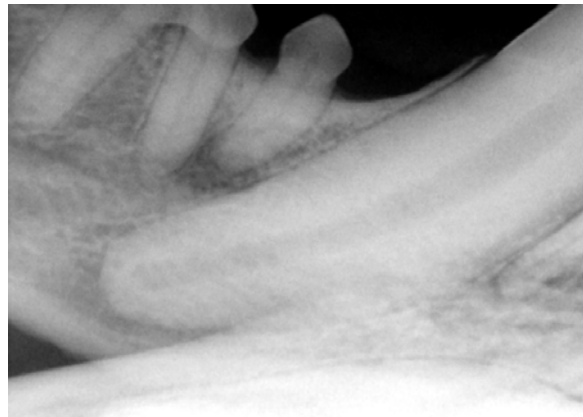
May 2006

History and Signalment:

A 2 yr old intact male German Shorthair Pointer presented due to a broken right mandibular canine tooth. The owner was unaware of when or how it was broken. The dog was eating and drinking well and showed no signs of any pain.

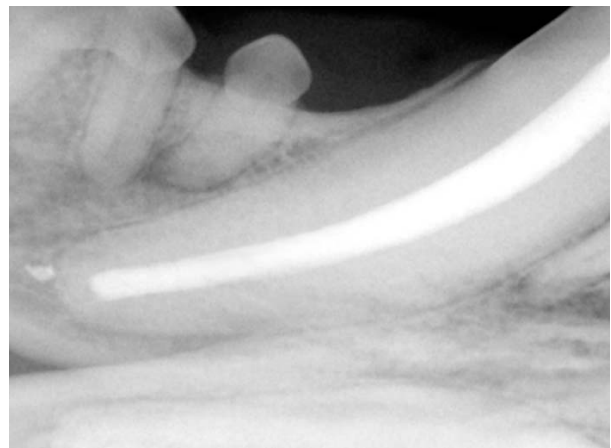
Physical Exam:

The oral exam showed a fractured right mandibular canine tooth. The pulp was exposed, but did not bleed until it was probed. Intraoral radiographs of the affected tooth were normal.



Procedure:

Root canal therapy (RCT) was performed on the broken tooth. The procedure involves removing the necrotic pulp material and disinfecting the pulp chamber. A material was placed in the canal to seal it and prevent reinfection. Finally, the access site is restored. In this case, the owner chose not to have a crown placed on the tooth. A metal crown is not always necessary, but will strengthen the tooth.



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Discussion:

In this case there are only two options for treatment: extraction or RCT. Even though the dog appeared to act like nothing was bothering him, teeth with exposed pulp can be a source of chronic pain. After a pet is treated with RCT, it is very common for a client to report that their pet is more playful, acts younger or has a better personality. They attribute the pet's behavior before the procedure to normal aging. Dogs have a natural tendency to hide their pain and it is often not recognized until it is treated.

What is going on with this 6 month old bichon and how would you treat it? Find out next month.

