

How often do you see cats during a routine physical examination with tip fractures of the canine teeth? The pulp canal of a cat's canine tooth comes within millimeters of the tip of the tooth, making even seemingly minor tip fractures suspicious for pulp involvement. The arrow in the radiograph below shows the tip of the pulp canal in a 16 month old cat's canine tooth. This patient presented for traumatic fractures of three canine teeth – this was the only canine tooth not fractured.



What would your recommendation be for this patient?
If the pulp canals are exposed what are the **ONLY TWO TREATMENT OPTIONS?**

(The article should link to the website after this)

The patient was anesthetized for full mouth radiographs and an oral examination. A potential concern for a cat this age was whether the apices of the teeth were closed. Open apices would complicate a root canal procedure to save these teeth. Fortunately, the apices were closed. Anesthetized oral examination revealed pulp exposure in all three fractured canine teeth. Notice the photo below with pathfinders inserted into each pulp canal prior to performing any treatment.



The two potential treatment options were offered to the owner:

- 1) Root Canal
- 2) Extraction

Leaving teeth like these untreated or “monitoring” them allows for continued pain and a pathway for infection. Regardless of whether the patient is demonstrating clinical signs of pain, the nerve is exposed and these teeth are painful.

The owner opted to have root canals performed in this young cat to retain the canine teeth. The procedure was performed and the fracture sites were restored with composite.

