



CAYMAN ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Modern veterinary medicine ... Old fashioned care.



Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions

- ❖ **FACT** According to information presented at the American Veterinary Dental Forum, if your cat is over five years old, there is a 72% chance he or she has a painful Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesion (FORL).
- ❖ **FACT** These dental resorptions once called cat cavities or neck lesions can occur in any tooth. The most commonly affected teeth are the premolars and molars.
- ❖ **Fact** FORLS are unlike cavities in humans, which are the result of bacterial enzymes and acids digesting the teeth. The cause of FORLS is unknown.
- ❖ **Fact** Cells known as odontoclasts are found in the defects and result in tooth destruction. The trigger for this reaction has not yet been determined, but either a reaction to dental plaque, an autoimmune response or an exposure to viruses (Cat Flu) has been postulated.
- ❖ **FACT** Cats affected with FORLS may show excessive salivation, oral bleeding or have difficulty chewing.
- ❖ **FACT** A majority of affected cats do not show obvious signs but are in pain. When a soft probe is applied to the suspected FORL (conscious or under anesthesia) this causes pain and the jaw spasms (chatters) when the FORL is touched.



The FORL can present in FOUR stages

Stage 1 An enamel defect is noted. The lesion is usually minimally sensitive in because it has not entered the dentin. One must remember that FORLS are a progressive disease process and extraction is recommended.

Stage 2 Lesions penetrate the enamel and dentin and are variably painful. As these lesions are progressive and the long term (greater than two years) effectiveness of restoration of Stage 2 lesions have not been proven, we strongly recommend that teeth affected with FORL lesions are surgically extracted.

Stage 3 These lesions are not only painful, but in addition bacteria can now gain access to the tooth root with the risk of abscess development. Tooth root abscesses have been well documented as chronic sources of infection that can lead to infections on the heart valves, in the liver, kidneys, spleen, joints, bones and central nervous system. In the interest of pain control and disease prevention these teeth must be surgically extracted.

Stage 4 These lesions are often occult (hidden). Structural weakening of the tooth results in a fracture of the crown and the gum surface frequently grows over this painful lesion. Treatment requires surgical extraction of the root fragments if the overlying gum appears inflamed or painful upon probing.

Our surgical extraction techniques include the routine use of a local anesthetic nerve block followed by either tooth root extraction using the process of periodontal elevation or a gingival flap technique. These are controlled extraction methods for potentially fragile/damaged teeth.