

FELINE RESORPTIVE LESIONS



Resorptive Lesions:

The exact causes of RLs are not completely understood, although research is currently under way to understand this painful condition.



Factors that may contribute include:

- **Age:** usually but not always 5-7 years +.
- **Inflammation:** chronic inflammation can cause some lesions.
- **Breed predisposition:** Certain breeds, like Siamese and other oriental cats.
- **Dental hygiene:** Cats with poor dental care may be at higher risk.



What are resorptive lesions in cats?

(Also known as odontoclastic resorptive lesions - FORLs, cervical lesions and feline tooth resorption.)

Resorptive Lesions (RLs), are a common dental problem where the tooth structures are broken down and absorbed by the body. This process then exposes the sensitive part of the tooth. These lesions affect up to 70% of cats over the age of 7 years and cause significant pain and discomfort. There are two main types of resorption, although the general approach to treatment is similar.

Signs of resorptive lesions

RLs can be difficult to detect because cats tend to hide pain. Sometimes you may notice:

- Weight loss
- Tooth loss
- Pawing at the mouth
- Dribbling
- Behavioural changes (e.g., sleeping a lot, irritability or reluctance to play)
- Swelling or redness around the gums (even small red dots on the surface of the tooth or at the edge of the gum line)
- Difficulty chewing or dropping food
- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Tooth discoloration or visible lesions on the teeth
- Often there are no obvious external symptoms

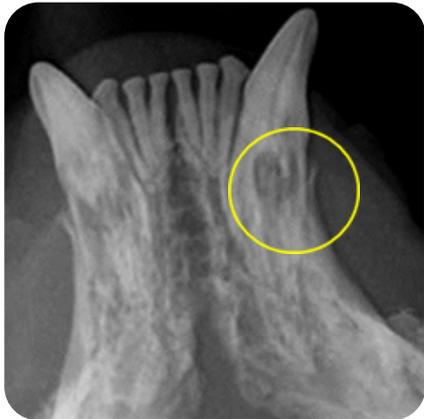
I thought he was just getting old.

A common misinterpretation of pain in cats.



Diagnosis of resorptive lesions

Your veterinarian will usually identify RLs with a thorough oral exam. Dental radiographs (x-rays) are essential for detecting early lesions as they usually start on the root of the tooth before they extend to the visible area of the crown. The absence of visible oral lesions does not necessarily mean that there is no disease present. This is why dental radiography is an integral part of feline dentistry.



All three canines in these two radiographs have resorptive lesions. One is highlighted - can you see the others?



Treatment options

Treatment is limited at this stage, but may change as research discovers more about these lesions:

- **Tooth extraction.** The affected tooth almost always needs to be removed. Extractions are the most effective way to relieve pain.
- **Pain management.** Cats with RLs often experience pain, even if they don't show it, so your vet may prescribe pain relief and anti-inflammatory medications.

In retrospect: people often report improvement in their cat's behaviour and wellbeing after treatment. Usually they hadn't identified that pain was present before treatment.

Overview

Feline Resorptive Lesions are a common dental issue that can cause significant discomfort for cats. With early detection and appropriate treatment, your cat's dental health can be managed effectively, improving their comfort and quality of life. Regular dental checkups and home care are key to preventing and managing this condition.

If you suspect your cat might have RLs or are concerned about their dental health, please speak to your veterinarian.