

## Endodontic vs. Periodontal Infections

As dentists we are sometimes presented with a tooth that has a periapical lucency that also has a periodontal component. There are specific diagnostic examinations necessary to distinguish between an endodontic and a periodontal infection. Certainly there are some infections that may have both an endodontic and periodontal components. Some of these are primarily endodontic and secondarily periodontal in nature while others are primarily periodontal and secondarily endodontic in nature. Finally, there is a subset of lesions that are true endodontic/periodontal lesions.

One of the primary facts that need to be established in distinguishing endo/perio lesions is the pulp status of the specific tooth. If the pulp status is determined to be vital then the tooth likely has a periodontal infection. If on the other hand, the pulp status has been determined to be necrotic or abscessed, then the tooth likely has an endodontic infection. Pulp testing includes temperature testing (hot or cold) and testing with an Electric Pulp Tester (EPT). Another crucial measurement in determining whether a tooth has an endodontic or periodontal infection is periodontal probing. Periodontal infections have periodontal pockets that are wide in nature, whereas endodontic infections have either no deep periodontal pockets or narrow periodontal defects. It is important to note that a deep narrow periodontal pocket may be indicative of a vertical root fracture (VRF). Radiographically, VRFs present as J-shaped lesions rather than circular shaped peri-apical lesions.

As is the case with any treatment, the decision to treat a tooth endodontically or periodontally should be based on a foundation of sound diagnosis. Radiographs, diagnostic clinical examination as well as a thorough dental history are paramount in reaching a correct diagnosis. After all, a treatment can only be as good as the diagnosis.

We at Richmond Endodontic Centre hope this newsletter provides some useful information to our dental colleagues. We appreciate any feedback and questions. You can be certain that we will provide high quality endodontic care to your patients. We look forward to becoming a part of your dental team!

Regards,



Dr. Joel N. Fransen  
BSc(OT), DMD, FRCD(C)  
Certified Specialist in Endodontics



**Richmond Endodontic Centre**  
Dr. Joel N. Fransen

**110-11300 No.5 Rd**  
Richmond, BC V7A 5J7  
office@endodonticcentre.com  
**T 604.274.3499**  
**F 604.274.3477**

### Office Hours

8am to 5pm - Monday to Saturday  
Extended hours are also available

This newsletter and all of the previous newsletters are posted on our Facebook page 'RICHMOND ENDODONTIC CENTRE' and will be available on the updated web page (coming soon) at [www.endodonticcentre.com](http://www.endodonticcentre.com).

If you have any questions about this or other newsletters please contact our office.