



## DENTITION STUDY

### MISPLACED DECIDUOUS (BABY) LOWER CANINE TEETH IN IRISH WOLFOUND PUPPIES - A GUIDE FOR OWNERS -

The IWHG has been carrying out an observational study into the development of teeth and jaw alignment in Irish Wolfhound puppies. The study has been running for six years and includes historical information gathered by many breeders of long standing.

This was as a result of:

- (a) an apparent rise in canine orthodontic referrals (especially for young puppies)
- (b) the Kennel Club's inclusion of "misplaced lower canines" as the only "Breed Watch" point for Irish Wolfhounds

Canine dentistry has had an upsurge in popularity in recent years and the IWHG is concerned that some owners may be persuaded to have their puppies operated on, for conditions which could potentially correct themselves naturally given time.

There have been an increasing number of incidences reported to the IWHG and to breeders, in which vets have advised owners that puppies as young as 10 weeks needed surgery to correct dentition faults. This is of great concern, especially considering the possible harmful effects of general anaesthesia on young sighthound puppies, of which some vets seem unaware.

In this study, we have been particularly interested in whether the position of the deciduous (baby) teeth in IW puppies, has a direct effect on the way the adult teeth erupt. This seems to be one of the major concerns of canine orthodontists, who propose that surgery to remove deciduous teeth may be required to prevent the incorrect eruption and placement of the permanent teeth.

The information gathered from owners and breeders over many years has served to reinforce our original opinion, that because of their rapid and prolonged growth, Irish Wolfhound puppies do not conform to the normal pattern of dental development expected in most other breeds. It is not uncommon for Irish Wolfhound puppies' mouths to continue to alter up until 15 months of age, or even longer. Furthermore, having followed the development of a number of 6-10 week old puppies, who had less than perfect alignment of the deciduous teeth, we can say that unless there is evidence of jaw deformity, misplaced deciduous lower canines in particular, cannot be viewed as a reliable indicator that the permanent teeth will be similarly affected. These malocclusions of the deciduous teeth are usually transient and occur as a result of a temporary disparity in relative jaw growth.

**For this reason, we advise that you exercise extreme caution if you have been told that your puppy's lower canine teeth need to be removed. Your 3 - 5 month old puppy is unlikely to be in any more discomfort than any other puppy during the teething and shedding process. We therefore suggest that any pain relief deemed necessary should be given as for 'normal' teething trouble.**

Please also read the information, photographs and transcript of the PowerPoint presentation given at the 2019 IWHG Seminar regarding this study, which can be found via these links:-

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/development.html> - pictorial development

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/Dentition-update-Nov-19.pdf> - PowerPoint presentation

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dentition-owner.html> - owner survey online form

Details/enquiries: Caroline Sheppard email: [goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com](mailto:goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com)