

Saving Neglected Teeth

Help is Available

For those who have been putting off that much-needed visit to the dentist, here's encouraging news. In recent years, new techniques have been developed to handle problems ranging from treating a badly broken-down tooth to helping an extremely nervous patient relax.

Treating an Abscess

Decay that reaches the nerve of the tooth causes it to become infected or abscessed. Fortunately, the majority of abscessed teeth can be saved using a procedure called root canal therapy. The dentist cuts a small access cavity into the tooth and pulp chamber is cleaned out using special instruments. An antiseptic dressing kills any bacteria present and once the tooth is free of pain and infection, the pulp chamber can be filled.

Saving A Broken Tooth

Even though you may think a tooth is beyond saving because it is so badly broken down, there are techniques that can restore the use of the tooth so long as the root portion is healthy.

The dentist can repair a badly broken tooth by replacing the missing and decayed part of the tooth with amalgam. To secure the filling tiny metal pins are screwed into the healthy part of the tooth. Amalgam is then packed tightly around the pins and shaped to the proper tooth contour. Large cavities in front teeth can be treated similarly, only tooth coloured filling materials are used. These days cosmetic options are available for back teeth.

Damaged Front Teeth

A chipped or stained front tooth can usually be helped quite simply using a technique called tooth bonding. Tooth bonding is procedure in which a tooth coloured plastic is bonded on to the surface of a tooth to replace a missing piece or cover a stained area.

The dentist conditions the surface of the tooth opening microscopic pores in the surface of the tooth. By flowing the bonding agent into these pores the filling material can be stuck to the tooth. Special lights are used to firmly set the filling material.

Gum Disease

Many teeth are lost because of gum related problems. The early stages of gum disease can be treated at home with special care techniques shown to you by your dentist. More advanced gum problems have to be treated by your dentist. They will remove plaque and hardened deposits (calculus/tartar) from the root portion of teeth.

The Road To Recovery

Priority should be given to treating painful teeth. Once the mouth is free of pain a plan of repair and maintenance can be worked out.