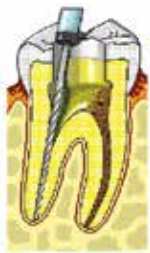


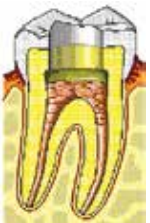
Your Tooth Can Be Saved By Root Canal Therapy

What is Root Canal Therapy?

You have a painful tooth. Your dentist tells you the only way to save it is through root canal therapy. What does this mean? Your dentist will cut a small access cavity at the back or top of the tooth. The pulp or nerve chamber is cleaned out using special instruments. An antiseptic dressing is placed to kill any bacteria present.



When the canal is free from infection the pain will subside. Now it is filled and sealed with a material specifically designed for the task. (see below) Some teeth have only one canal, for example, a front tooth, but a molar could have three or four canals. These procedures can take from one to four visits to complete.



When Do You Need Root Canal Therapy?

A diseased pulp is usually extremely painful. A severe toothache can be a symptom that your tooth requires root canal therapy. Pain on biting may be another clue.

Sometimes deterioration of the nerve is so gradual that no pain symptoms are felt. In this case, a routine x-ray examination and other techniques can disclose the need for root canal therapy even when no pain is present.

You might also feel a strange pain, referred into other teeth remote from the diseased tooth, or even into the ear. You may think you are experiencing an earache. It is possible to believe an upper tooth is the offending one when actually it is the lower tooth. In all cases the final diagnosis must be made by your dentist.



Why Does my Tooth Require This Treatment?

There are several reasons for the tooth's nerve to die.

1. Bacteria can infect the nerve of the tooth through a deep cavity. Decay is an infection of your tooth.
2. Trauma to a tooth, as in a car accident or a football game, can damage the blood supply to the nerve resulting in its death.
3. Sometimes advanced gum disease may affect the nerve.
4. The nerves of old heavily restored teeth occasionally die for no apparent reason.

What are the Odds for Success?

Research indicates that 90% of root canal therapy cases are successful for life. Even if you have a failed root canal, if it is redone properly, you have a 70% chance of it lasting the rest of your life. The odds are heavily stacked in your favour.

Do not succumb to the fast and easy way out by having a painful tooth extracted. Replacing an extracted tooth usually involves more time and expense than keeping the tooth. Make every effort to seek root canal therapy and save your own natural tooth.

Failure to replace an extracted tooth allows other teeth to drift, adversely affecting the bite and chewing power. The remaining teeth may become overloaded and break. Loss of support for the facial musculature may occur leading to a drawn in appearance

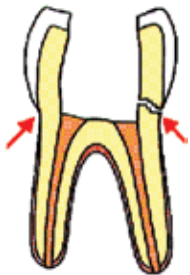
Is Root Canal Therapy a Good Investment for the Consumer?

A tooth that has had treatment could last you the rest of your life. This is one of the wisest dental investments you could make. To replace the gap an extracted tooth leaves would cost you much more.

Is That The End Of It?

No. When a nerve is removed the tooth becomes more brittle. As front teeth are not chewing teeth they do not receive the load of back teeth. Unless they were badly broken down due to decay they normally don't require reinforcing with complex restorative procedures. Bleaching may be required if the tooth has gone black when the nerve died.

Conversely, back teeth must be reinforced after root canal therapy. If this is not done the corners of the tooth may fracture and the tooth may not be salvageable. So, what can be done? You should always have an "overlayed" restoration placed. This is a filling which covers the corners of your teeth supporting them so they do not fracture. Better still a crown could be placed over your tooth to reinforce it.



Will My Tooth Turn Black?

Occasionally a tooth can darken in colour, but it doesn't turn black. Mostly a discoloured tooth can be lightened by bleaching it from the inside. If this fails, a crown can be made to cover it.