



Root Canal Treatment

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When a dentist talks about your tooth, he isn't just referring to the hard white bony bits in your mouth. A tooth also comprises of nerves, blood vessels which make up the tooth's pulp. When the pulp and the tissue surrounding the root of the tooth get diseased or injured, you need endodontic therapy to save the tooth. Most people refer to the treatment as a 'root canal treatment' or endodontic therapy'.

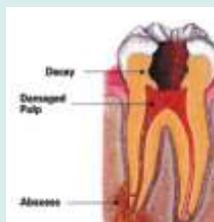
Your tooth might need an endodontic treatment if:

- It hurts when you bite down on it, touch it or push on it
- It is sensitive to heat
- It is sensitive to cold for more than a couple of minutes
- There is swelling near the tooth
- It is discoloured (whether it hurts or not)
- It is broken

When do you need a root canal treatment???

Root canal treatment is needed for two main reasons.

The first is infection. An untreated cavity is the most common cause of pulp infection. The decay erodes the enamel and dentin of the tooth until it reaches pulp and/or root canal. This allows bacteria to infect the pulp. The inflammation caused by the infection reduces the blood supply to the tooth and keeps it from healing.



The second reason for a root canal treatment is damage to the pulp that can't be fixed. Trauma or a fractured tooth can damage the pulp. In certain cases, when the pulp is inflamed but not infected, it may heal on its own. Your dentist may want to see if this will happen before endodontic treatment. However, if the pulp remains inflamed, it can be painful and may lead to infection.

WHY NOT JUST REMOVE THE BROKEN TOOTH???

There are several downsides to losing a natural tooth. If a tooth is missing, the neighbouring teeth can drift out of line. They can also be overstressed from chewing. Saving your natural teeth helps you to avoid other treatments, such as implants or bridges. Once you ignore an infected or injured tooth, you risk spreading the infection to other parts of your body.

TREATMENT PROCEDURE:

There are several steps in the process of endodontic therapy that your dentist or will perform to save your tooth. You may have to make more than one visit.

To begin with, the dentist will administer local anaesthesia to make you more comfortable.

A hole is made in the crown of the tooth into the pulp chamber.

The pulp or remaining tissue is then carefully removed from both the pulp chamber and the root canals.

Each root canal is then cleaned and shaped to allow it to be filled.

Medication may be placed in the pulp chamber and root canals to help eliminate bacteria.

A temporary filling may be placed in the crown opening to prevent saliva from entering the chamber and root canals, or your dentist might immediately begin the next stage of filling the root canal.

In this stage the dentist will remove the temporary filling (if on was placed during the previous visit). The root canals are usually filled with gutta-percha, a rubber-like material made from various tropical trees.

In the final step, the temporary filling is removed and the tooth may be restored by a crown or a filling to strengthen and improve its appearance.

The crown may be made of porcelain or metal alloy, and the filling may be made of many different materials.

You might be prescribed antibiotics and other medication during the course of your treatment.

