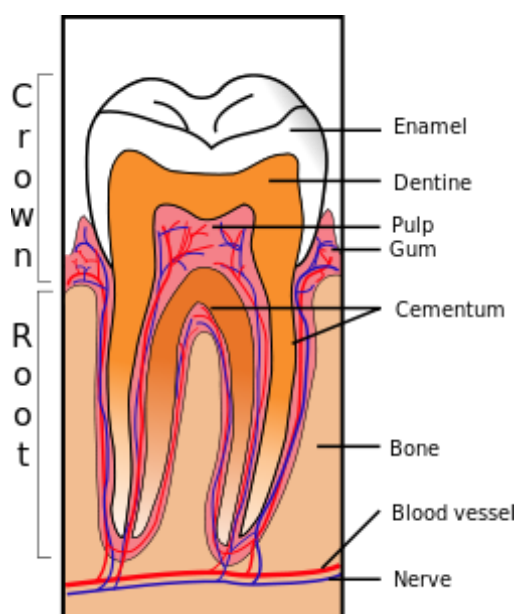


# Root canal treatment (Endodontic treatment)

## ***Why is it needed?***

Inside each tooth is the pulp - this consists of nerves, blood vessels and connective tissue. The pulp is important for the growth, development and health of the tooth. However, the pulp can become inflamed or damaged if there is:

- Deep decay
- Trauma
- Deep fillings
- Cracked teeth



## ***Symptoms that may indicate need for root canal treatment...***

When the pulp is damaged beyond its ability to repair itself, it will die and then become infected.

This may present itself as:

- Prolonged sensitivity to hot or cold
- Pain
- Swelling
- Tenderness to biting
- Soreness in the gums around the tooth



When the infection has resulted in the death of the nerve, treatment requires the removal of the pulp. This leaves 2 options:

1. Extraction of the tooth; or
2. Root canal treatment

#### ***What are the benefits of root canal treatment?***

- Easier cleaning and maintenance
- Prevents problems associated with losing a tooth - such as tilting or drifting of adjacent teeth and difficulty chewing
- It can be more cost effective than removing and replacing with an artificial tooth

#### **The Procedure**

We begin by removing any old fillings in order to assess for:

- Cracks
- Restorability - an assessment of remaining tooth structure available.

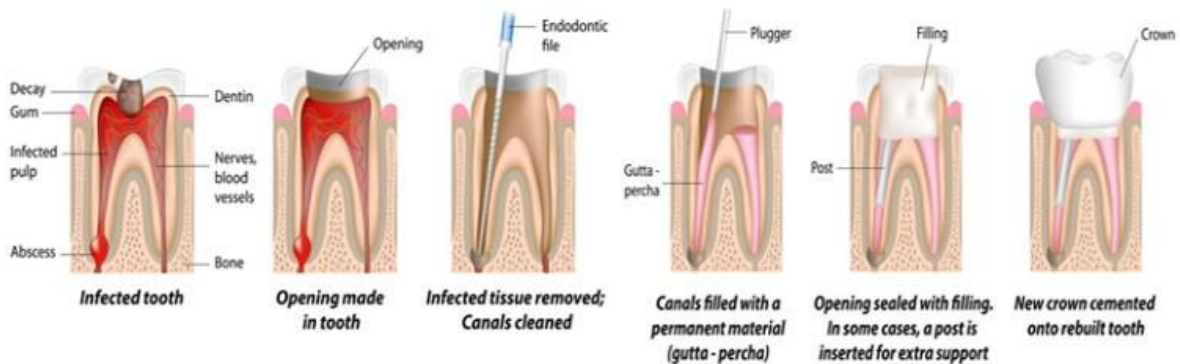
This is important *before* we begin root canal treatment. Your tooth will not be treated unless the root canal treatment is likely to succeed.



Over 3 visits we will:

- Open into the tooth, remove infected tissue and place an antibiotic paste canal.
- Clean and shape the canals and place an antibacterial paste into the canal.
- Fill the canals with a permanent material (gutta percha).

## Root Canal Therapy



Each visit, anaesthetic will usually be given and a thin sheet of latex, called rubber dam, is used to isolate the tooth to keep it clean and dry during the visit. Between each visit, medication is placed into the canals and sealed off with a temporary filling to protect the inside of the tooth from between visits. Between visits you may experience some discomfort, usually lasting no more than a few days. Panadol or nurofen may be taken.

In the case of molars and premolars, a *metal band* is usually placed to secure the filling during treatment. If the temporary filling breaks off, please contact us as soon as possible.

### **Possible side effects of treatment**

The following list of possible side effects is intended to inform you about some of the potential problems.

- Infection - Infection usually heals once treatment is completed, however in the minority of cases, persistence or reinfection can occasionally occur. In a small number of cases, the end of the root may need to be removed to help treat an abscess.
- Pain or discomfort may occur during and following treatment. If it lasts more than a few days, please inform us. Additional treatment may be required.
- Discolouration - the tooth may lose its original whiteness and become darker.
- Separation of instruments - despite all efforts and precautions taken, there is a low risk that there may be separation of the instruments within the canal.
- Difficulty locating canals due to calcifications, narrow root canals, small chamber, crown present, etc.

We are able to treat and complete most teeth requiring root canal treatment. However, depending on the difficulty of the case, referral to an endodontist (root canal specialists) may be required.

### **After root canal treatment**

Often after root canal treatment is performed, the tooth is a lot weaker than previously. Root canal treated teeth fracture more frequently than normal teeth. When a fracture occurs, it usually occurs vertically down the length of a tooth rendering it unrestorable. A crown may be indicated to help protect the tooth from fracture and prevent reinfection of the root canal filling.