

ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Each tooth has a space within it that contains blood vessels and nerve tissues that supply the tooth. A root canal treatment is needed if this tissue becomes infected or has severe swelling. The procedure involves cleaning out and filling that space to prevent bacteria from re-infecting the tooth. Root canal treatment allows the tooth to remain in place instead of being removed.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What materials are used in a root canal treatment?

Root canals must be carefully shaped, cleaned and filled to ensure the tooth remains free from re-infection. This is achieved by using:

- Small files to widen and shape the root canals
- A disinfecting solution to clean the root canals
- A material called Gutta Percha to fill the root canals
- An antibacterial sealer to prevent bacteria from re-infecting the root canal

2. What are the benefits of root canal treatment?

Root canal treatment help to eliminate pain and infection from your tooth and allow the area to remain healthy. When the inside of a tooth has become infected from bacteria or severely swollen from trauma, a root canal treatment is the only way to save the tooth.

3. What are the risks of root canal treatment?

As with any dental treatment, some inherent risks exist in having a root canal treatment.

Up to 10% of root canal treated teeth may experience continued pain and infection from the following:

- Nerve tissue remaining in the canal space
- Gutta Percha and sealer failing to completely fill the canal space
- An existing root fracture that was undetectable when the root canal treatment was done; in this case the tooth will not become comfortable and must be extracted

A root canal treated tooth is at significantly higher risk of fracturing than the same tooth without a root canal treatment. A crown or onlay that covers the cusps of the tooth will decrease the likelihood that the tooth will break and is highly recommended after the root canal is done.

4. What are the alternatives to having a root canal treatment?

The only alternative to a root canal treatment is to extract the tooth. If the nerve of a tooth is irreversibly damaged or dead, the body can not heal the tooth. While symptoms may initially resolve, the infection will always be present. This lingering, chronic infection can lead to future pain and swelling. It can also spread to other teeth and other parts of your body. Pain will always recur.

5. Are there any considerations after having a root canal treatment?

A temporary filling may be placed over a root canal treatment while the tooth is settling down and the area around the root is healing. The temporary must be replaced with a permanent restoration as soon as possible to prevent it from wearing down and allowing bacteria in your mouth to infect the new root canal filling.

