

# Root Canal Treatment



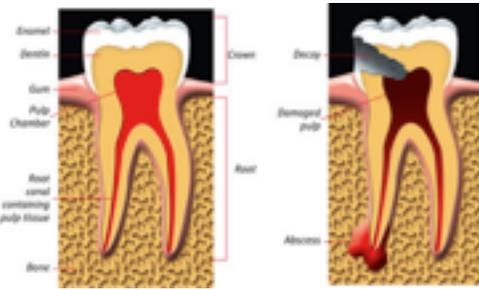
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## What is a Root Canal?

Root canal treatment, also known as endodontic treatment, is the process of removing infected, injured or dead pulp from a tooth. The space inside the hard layers of each tooth is called the root canal system. This system is filled with soft dental pulp made up of nerves and blood vessels that help your tooth grow and develop.

When bacteria (germs) enter your tooth through deep cavities, cracks or flawed fillings, your tooth can become abscessed. An abscessed tooth is a tooth with an infection in the pulp. If pulp becomes infected, it needs to be removed. An abscessed tooth may cause pain and/or swelling. Your dentist may notice the infection from a dental x-ray or from other changes with the tooth. If left untreated, an abscessed tooth can cause serious oral health problems.



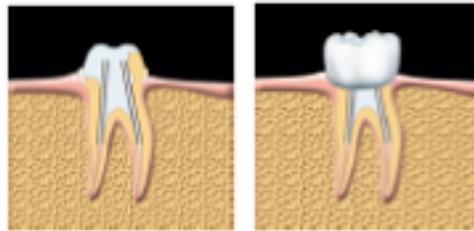
## How is a Root Canal Done?

1. The dentist or endodontist (root canal specialist) gives you a local anesthetic (freezing).
2. To protect your tooth from bacteria in your saliva during the treatment, the dentist places a rubber dam around the tooth being treated.
3. The dentist makes an opening in the tooth to reach the root canal system and the damaged pulp.
4. Using very fine dental instruments, the dentist removes the pulp by cleaning and enlarging the root canal system.
5. After the canal has been cleaned, the dentist fills and seals the canal. The

opening of the tooth is then sealed with either a temporary or permanent filling.

## Tooth Restoration after Root Canal

After root canal treatment, your tooth is brittle and prone to breakage. The dentist will likely recommend a crown with a post to restore your tooth.



## What else should I know?

Root canal treatment may take more than one appointment depending on your tooth. After a root canal, your tooth may be tender for the first few weeks. You may be prescribed pain killers, anti-inflammatories and/or antibiotics. Consult our office if you experience swelling or persistent pain.

You can still get a cavity or gum disease after a root canal treatment. Root canal treatment does not protect your tooth from other types of damage. With proper care and regular dental visits, the tooth could last as long as your other teeth. Most of the time, a tooth that has had a root canal treatment can be saved

## Complications

Most root canal treatments are successful however, in about 5% of cases a tooth may need to be re-treated, require root canal surgery or extraction. This may be due to one or more of the following reasons:

- The tooth may have extra canals that are hard to recognize.
- An inadequate seal was not achieved.
- There was a blockage in the canal so the dentist was not able to fill the canals to the apex of the tooth.
- The tooth may have a fracture.

- An infection that did not heal after regular treatment.
- An instrument was broken inside your tooth during treatment.—this is a known risk of treatment.

## Retreatment

Most root canal treatments are successful. But in some rare cases, a second root canal treatment is needed. This is called retreatment. When retreating a tooth, the root canal filling material is taken out, and the canal is recleaned, reshaped and refilled.

## Root canal surgery

Sometimes root canal surgery is needed when a regular root canal treatment cannot be done or when it has not worked. Surgery is done to:

Check the end of the root for fractures (cracks).

Remove parts of the root that could not be cleaned during regular root canal treatment.

Clear up an infection that did not heal after regular treatment.

When the nerve of your tooth becomes necrotic or infected, a successful root canal treatment lets you keep the tooth. The only other option is to have the tooth extracted.

Keeping your tooth helps to prevent your other teeth from drifting out of line and causing jaw problems. Saving a natural tooth avoids having to replace it with an implant, bridge or denture.

