

ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Every tooth has a space in the centre that contains the nerve (pulp) which can be damaged when a tooth is badly broken down. This can lead to pain and infection. An alternative to the extraction of the tooth is root canal treatment.

Common causes of damage to the pulp include:

- deep decay due to an untreated cavity
- multiple dental procedures on the same tooth
- a chip or crack in the tooth
- an injury to the tooth (You might injure a tooth if you get hit in the mouth. The pulp can still be damaged even if the injury doesn't crack the tooth.)



The goal of root canal treatment is to save a tooth that might otherwise require extraction. Although root canal treatment has a fairly high success rate 60-70%, as with all medical and dental procedures, it is a procedure which carries risks and limitations and results cannot always be guaranteed. Sometimes, the damage is too deep or the enamel too frail to withstand the procedure and this can lead to loss of the tooth.

What does RCT involve?

1. X-rays: to assess the need for root canal treatment
2. Local Anaesthesia: Local anaesthesia is administered to the affected tooth
3. Pulpectomy: the diseased root pulp is removed
4. Filling: the roots that have been opened up are filled and sealed off
5. Restoration Stage: For best outcomes after root canal treatment a permanent seal with a filling, crown or cap is recommended.



After the completion of the root canal procedure, your dentist will complete the permanent restoration (filling, crown or cap). Failure to have the tooth properly restored in a timely manner (generally within 30 days) significantly increases the possibility of failure of the root canal procedure or tooth fracture.

This procedure will not prevent future tooth decay, tooth fracture or gum disease- occasionally a tooth that has had root canal treatment may require re-treatment, endodontic surgery, or tooth extraction.

Treatment Risks & Limitations:

They might include but are not limited to:

- Failed Treatment requiring subsequent tooth extraction
- Instrument separation in the canal.
- Perforations (extra openings) of the canal with instruments.
- Blocked root canals that cannot be ideally completed.
- Post-operative infection requiring additional treatment or the use of antibiotics.
- Tooth and/or root fracture that may require extraction.
- Fracture, chipping, or loosening of existing tooth or crown.
- Post-treatment discomfort.
- Temporary or permanent numbness.
- Change in the bite or jaw joint difficulty (TMJ problems or TMD).
- Reactions to anaesthetics, chemicals or medications.

Other Treatment Choices:

- Conservative Management, Waiting for more definitive development of symptoms
- Tooth Extraction: To be replaced with either: nothing, a denture, a bridge or an implant