

Root Canal Therapy

What is it?
Why do I need it?

Root canal therapy is one of the most common procedures dentists use to effectively save badly decayed or broken down teeth. The intent is to save a tooth that would otherwise be extracted. Improved technology has made root canal therapy a painless process. While the success of root canal treatment approaches 100%, it is a therapy that is subject to the many variables of biology, and occasionally is not as successful as we would like.

The need for root canal therapy can arise for any one of a number of reasons. While many patients may have discomfort resulting from inflammation or infection of the pulp tissue, others may be completely without symptoms.

Common reasons for needing root canal therapy are:

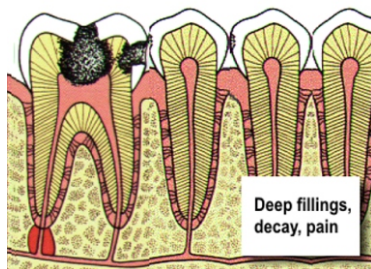
- Deep decay close to or encroaching on the pulp tissue ("nerve").
- Sufficiently large existing filling preventing effective reconstruction of the tooth.
- Severe fracture, either due to tooth fragility or trauma.

Effective reconstruction of teeth after root canal therapy is important. In many cases there is minimal remaining tooth structure, preventing successful long-term restoration with a simple filling. In almost all cases, root canal therapy dramatically weakens the tooth, allowing for severe fracture

The Sequence of Treatment

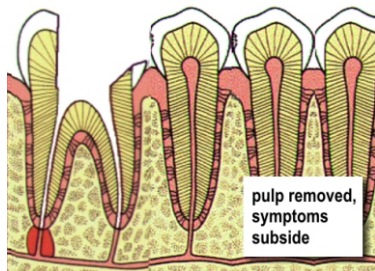
Diagnosis

Evaluation for need, depth of decay, size of existing restoration, degree of tooth fracture, presence of decay around existing restoration,



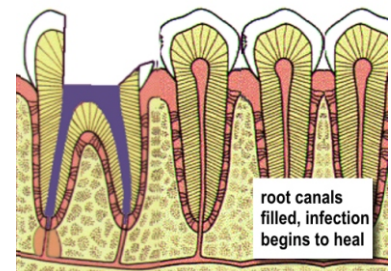
Damaged pulp removed

Decay is removed and access to the pulp tissue is established. The pulp tissue is removed, and the canals are cleaned and disinfected. Symptoms begin to subside.



Canals filled

The root canals are filled with an inert material. The infection, if present, will now heal. Reconstruction of the tooth can now begin.



Tooth is restored

A core filling, anchored to the remaining tooth with a post, is placed into the tooth. A crown is fabricated to reinforce the tooth to prevent fracture

