

ROOT CANAL TREATMENT WHAT'S THAT?

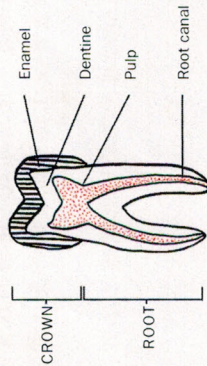
INTRODUCTION

Your dentist has recommended root canal treatment to save your tooth.

Before explaining root canal treatment, let's first understand the differences between a healthy and a diseased tooth.

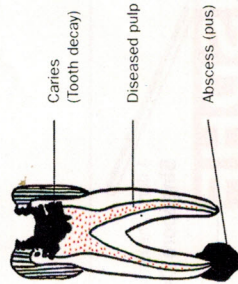
A HEALTHY TOOTH

A tooth consists of a crown and one or more roots. The roots anchor the tooth in the jaw bone. Within the tooth is the pulp, which contains nerves and blood vessels that nourish the tooth.



A DISEASED TOOTH

In a diseased tooth, the pulp is infected or damaged. The causes are usually tooth decay and sometimes, trauma or gum disease.



WHAT IS ROOT CANAL TREATMENT?

Root canal or endodontic treatment removes the infected or damaged pulp from the diseased tooth. After that the hollow pulp chamber and root canals are cleaned, filled and sealed.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ROOT CANAL TREATMENT?

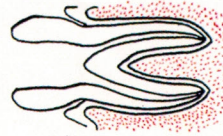
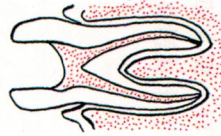
Root canal treatment saves teeth that would otherwise be extracted. Although the pulp has been removed, the tooth is still anchored in the bone and can still be used for biting and chewing.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO ROOT CANAL TREATMENT?

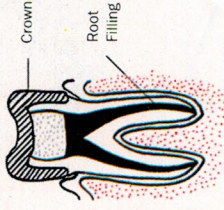
Extraction is the only alternative. The extracted tooth will have to be replaced by a denture or a bridge. Otherwise the neighbouring teeth will move into the space, creating problems with eating and cleaning. These problems can give rise to gum disease and new cavities.

HOW IS ROOT CANAL TREATMENT DONE?

1. An opening is made into the crown of the tooth.
2. The pulp is removed from the pulp chamber and the root canals. The canals are then cleaned.



3. The canals are filled with an inert material and the access opening covered with a permanent filling. In many cases, a crown is placed on the tooth.



Root canal treatment can sometimes be completed in one visit but often several visits are needed. Back teeth usually require more time for treatment because they have more canals and are harder to reach.

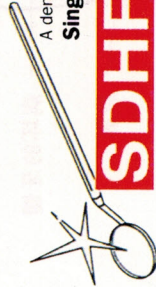
During root canal treatment, X-rays need to be taken at each stage to assess the lengths and positions of the canals.

CONCLUSION

A root canal treated tooth may be slightly more brittle than a normal tooth but with the proper restoration and care it can last a life time. Proper dental care include regular brushing, flossing, proper diet and six- monthly dental checkups.

Ask your dentist for more information if you still have any doubts or questions about root canal treatment.

Your dentist



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