

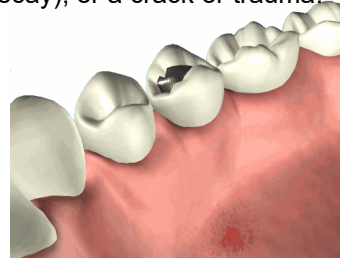
ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Q What is root canal treatment?

A Root Canal Treatment (also called Endodontics) is the only means of saving a tooth in which the nerves and blood vessels within the tooth have been damaged or have died. It is most often needed in teeth which have very large or deep fillings, or in teeth which have deep dental caries (decay), or a crack or trauma.

Q Why is root canal treatment needed?

A If the pulp becomes infected, the infection may spread through the root canal system of the tooth. This may eventually lead to an abscess. If root canal treatment (RCT) is not carried out, the infection will spread and the tooth may need to be taken out.

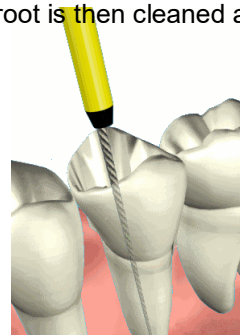


Q Does it hurt?

A No. A local anaesthetic is used and it should feel no different to having an ordinary filling done. Following treatment, the tooth may feel a little tender for a few days, but this can be normally controlled with the same medication that you might use for a headache.

Q What does it involve?

A The aim of the treatment is to remove all infection from the root canal. The root is then cleaned and filled to prevent any further infection. Root canal treatment is a skilled and time consuming procedure. Most courses of treatment will involve two or more visits to your dentist. At the first appointment the infected pulp is removed. Any abscesses, which may be present, can also be drained at this time. The root canal is then cleaned and shaped ready for the filling. A temporary filling is put in and the tooth is left to settle. The tooth is checked at a later visit and when all the infection has cleared, the tooth is permanently filled.



Q What will my tooth look like after treatment?

A In the past, a root filled tooth would often darken after treatment. However, with modern techniques this does not usually happen. If there is any discolouration, there are several treatments available to restore the natural appearance.

Q What if it happens again?

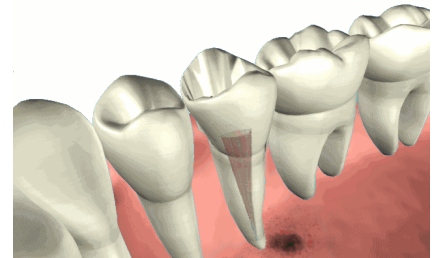
A Root canal treatment is usually very successful. It should however be remembered that it is impossible to guarantee success of any medical procedure. Even with the best treatment, healing may not occur due to circumstances beyond the control of the dentist. Should this occur, further steps may be required to eradicate the infection, like re-treatment, apicectomy, or referral to a specialist endodontist.

Q What if I don't have the treatment?

A The alternative is to have the tooth out. Once the pulp is destroyed, it can't heal and it is not recommended to leave an infected tooth in the mouth. Although some people would prefer an extraction, it is usually best to keep as many natural teeth as possible.

Q Will the tooth be safe after treatment?

A Root filled teeth are weaker and more brittle than live teeth. For this reason it is often advisable to restore the root-filled tooth with a crown or onlay to reinforce the tooth. We normally wait a few months after treatment so that we can be sure that the root canal treatment is OK prior to assessing whether crowning is advisable.



Q Where can this treatment be carried out?

A Root canal treatment is a routine dental procedure, which your dentist will be happy to do for you.

Q What about aftercare?

A Root treated teeth should be treated just the same as any other tooth. Remember to clean your teeth at least once a day, preferably with a fluoride toothpaste. Cut down on sugary snacks, and keep them only to mealtimes if possible. See your dentist for regular check ups.