

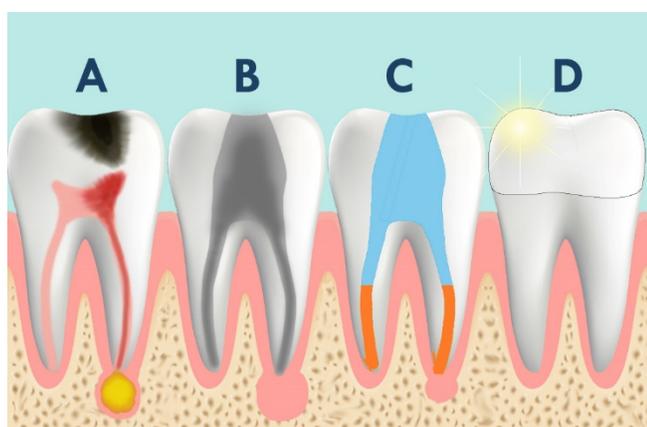
INFORMATION SHEET ON ROOT CANAL THERAPY



When a tooth is severely broken or infected, there are only two options to restore the health of your mouth: remove the tooth, or repair it through root canal therapy. This information is presented to you so that you can be better informed about your healthcare decisions.

What is a root canal?

Endodontic, or “root canal” therapy, is the cleaning out and sealing of the soft-tissue (“pulp” or “nerve”) space inside of a tooth and its root(s). A root canal is necessary when the pulp inside the tooth is severely inflamed, infected, or has died off. The general steps are outlined below:



- A** – An infected, decayed, or fractured tooth. Often it may have an abscess (pus) under the tooth.
- B** – The tooth is hollowed out and disinfected, all the way through to the bottom of the roots.
- C** – The roots are sealed, and a reinforcing filling and/or post is placed inside the tooth for strength.
- D** – Treatment is completed with a crown for added resistance to chewing forces.

Is it painful?

No. What *is* painful is the exposed nerve and/or abscess that *caused* you to need the root canal. In some emergency situations, the root canal is done while the tooth is still actively infected, which can be uncomfortable. Thus, antibiotics are often prescribed days or weeks before starting the root canal.

Does it work?

Yes! Root canal therapy is around 90-95% effective. While not all teeth can be repaired with a root canal, most can be, and that repair can last several decades. But the treatment does leave the tooth relatively brittle, thus a crown is recommended to complete the treatment.

“I’ve heard there is controversy about root canals causing health problems?”

The internet is full of false information about root canals, but root canals are the standard method of treating an infected or broken tooth. It is true that not all teeth can be completely disinfected, and about 5-10% of root-canaled teeth have persistent infections or cracks in them that ultimately require the tooth to be removed. But the root canal treatment itself cannot cause an infection.

Unfortunately, not all countries use the same techniques, and in some places, chemicals like formaldehyde are used. Instead, we seal the tooth with a natural, plant-based, non-latex rubber that does not leak chemicals or other irritants in to your body.

There are other factors not discussed here. This is only a preliminary information sheet that does not consider any of the variables that make you unique. Be sure to discuss any questions you may have about your situation with your doctor.