

# ENDODONTIC TREATMENT

## (ROOT CANAL TREATMENT)



### ***What is a root canal treatment?***

Your teeth have 'roots' that anchor them into your jawbone. Inside each of your teeth there is a mixture of blood vessels and nerves called the pulp. The pulp within the root is called the root canal.

Root canal treatment indicated if there is inflammation or infection inside your tooth.

### ***Why is root canal treatment needed?***

If your tooth is damaged, bacteria can get inside. This causes irritation, pain and swelling in the pulp. The aim of root canal treatment is to save your tooth by removing the damaged pulp and treating the infection and inflammation.

You may need root canal treatment for a number of reasons, including severe tooth decay; repeated dental treatment on the tooth; cracked tooth or filling; gum disease or trauma to the tooth.

If the infection isn't treated, it can spread further and cause an abscess, which is a collection of pus. This can be painful, tender and can cause swelling around your tooth and jaw.

### ***Why save the tooth?***

Today patients have more options than ever before when it comes to treating their teeth. Understanding your choices and their impact on your future dental health and lifestyle is important. Saving a natural tooth through root canal treatment should always be the first choice for longer-term oral health and cosmetic results. There are many advantages to saving your natural tooth:

- Efficient chewing
- Normal biting force, so you can continue to eat your favourite foods
- Maintains a natural appearance
- Limits the need for more costly, ongoing dental work

Teeth with root canal treatments are often heavily broken down and more brittle, so your dentist may advise a crown as a long-term restoration rather than a filling. A crown will help protect the tooth from breakage, stop bacteria from re-entering, restore the shape of the tooth, and preserve its function and appearance.

### ***Does root canal treatment hurt?***

Root canal treatment isn't painful – its purpose is to relieve pain. The toothache you are experiencing is caused by the damaged pulp, which is removed during root canal treatment to give relief from the pain. Root canals have historically had a reputation for being unpleasant and painful procedures, but thanks to new techniques and anaesthetics, these days they are no more uncomfortable than having a 'normal' filling.

### ***What are the alternatives to root canal treatment?***

The alternative to root canal is to remove the tooth completely, as the infection won't heal on its own. Your dentist will always try and save your natural tooth, but there are situations where the tooth has to be removed as root canal treatment will not be successful.

### ***Are there any complications?***

Most root canal treatment is successful, but as with any procedure, there can be occasional complications. These include:

- Damage to the root canal or the tissue surrounding the tooth
- Discomfort during treatment
- Pain or swelling after treatment
- Prolonged infection during treatment
- A complicated root canal system
- Fracture of the tooth (lower risk when crown is done)
- Re-infection of the tooth following treatment
- Instrument separation during treatment

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### *What happens during root canal treatment?*

**Stage 1:** Draining the infection – this is the first visit. The area will be numbed and a small hole made in the top of the tooth to access the pulp system. This will be disinfected and a medication with a temporary filling will be placed inside the tooth. You will then be seen after the medication has worked, normally a week or so later.



**Stage 2:** Cleaning the root canal system with accurate instruments and antibacterial chemicals, with the help of x-ray images. The instruments help to make the canals a more regular shape to enable the tooth to be filled and cleaned more precisely. This stage may take more than one visit if the tooth is heavily infected.

**Stage 3a:** Sealing the root canal system. Once the tooth is clean, your dentist will fill and seal the root canal system.

**Stage 3b:** Filling and/or crowning the tooth. A permanent filling will then be placed in the tooth to close the hole that has been made. This will likely be followed by a crown in the future to reinforce the tooth.

### *What about after root canal treatment?*

After any local anaesthetic, it will take a couple of hours before the feeling comes back into your jaw. You'll be able to go back to work or your normal activities after the procedure, but be careful of the area that is numb. You may have some slight tenderness around the area, and it may feel a little swollen and bruised, but this usually only lasts for a few days. You can take some paracetamol or ibuprofen to help with any discomfort.

### *What will my tooth look like afterwards?*

Traditionally, root canal treatment is associated with causing teeth to become darker. However, modern techniques allow your dentist to leave your tooth looking almost exactly as it did before the treatment.

### *How much will it cost and how long will it take?*

Cost and time are dependent on the tooth, the number of root canals to be cleaned, and other clinical variables. Usual treatment time is about 1-2 hours per appointment. There are usually two appointments. Approximate fees are £495-950.

1. The procedure(s) necessary to treat the condition(s) have been explained to me, and I understand the nature of the procedure(s).
2. I have been informed of possible alternative methods of treatment, including no treatment at all. If symptoms persist beyond 6 weeks following Endodontic treatment, surgical root canal therapy may need to be considered (additional fees apply). Extraction is another alternative.
3. It has been explained to me and I understand that a perfect result is not guaranteed or warranted and cannot be guaranteed or warranted.
4. I have been given the opportunity to question the dentist concerning the nature of treatment, the inherent risks of the treatment, and the alternatives to this treatment. This consent form does not encompass the entire discussion I had regarding the treatment.
5. A six month follow up will be required to assess the healing of the tooth.
6. I agree to return promptly to have my root canal completed. I understand that if I fail to attend future appointments, I am responsible for any consequences.

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_