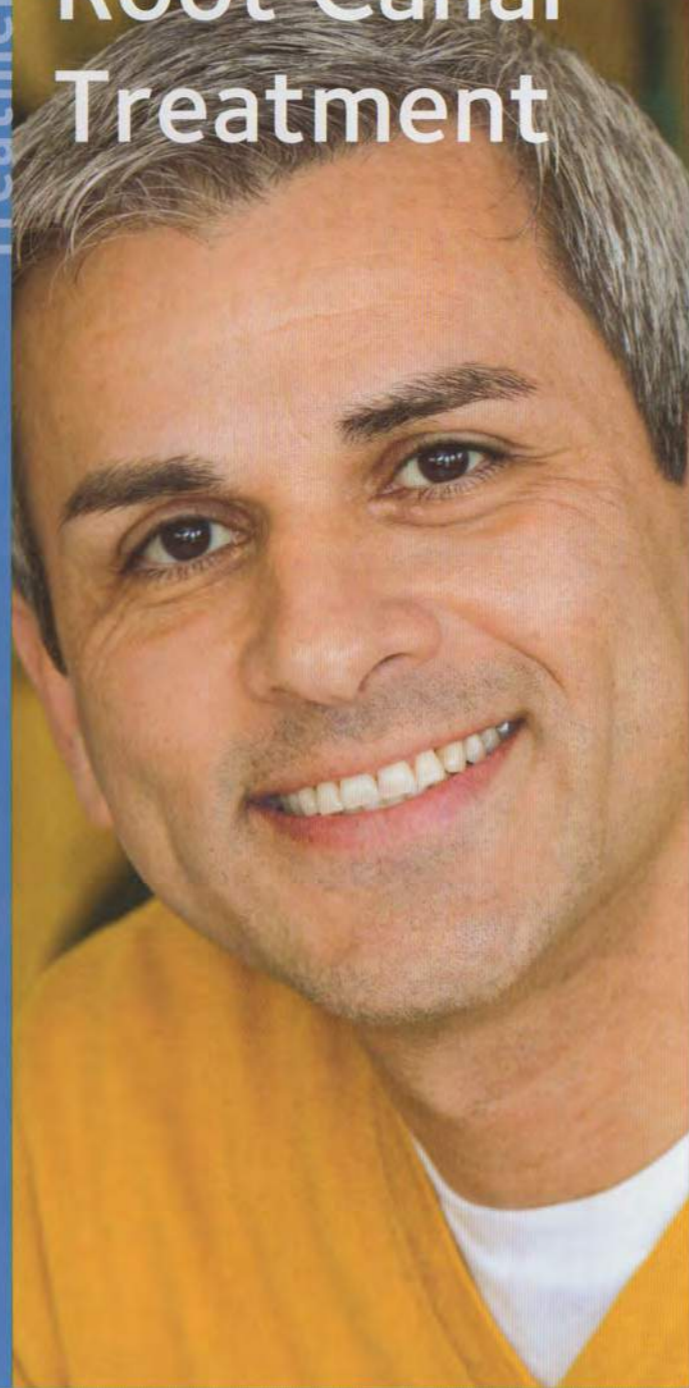


Root Canal Treatment



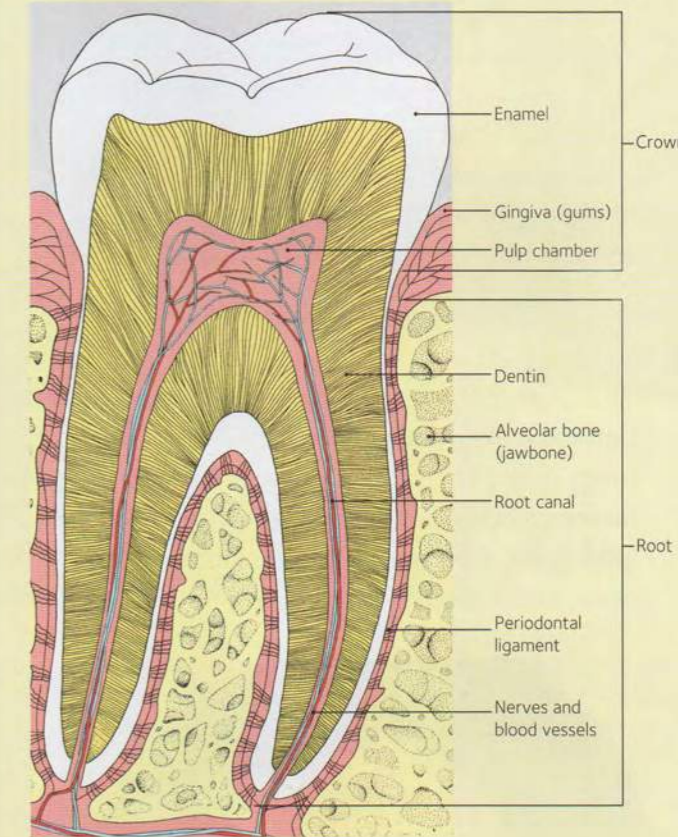
Root Canal Treatment Can Save Your Tooth

Your teeth are meant to last a lifetime. Years ago, diseased or injured teeth were often pulled. But today, even if the pulp inside one of your teeth is injured or infected, the tooth often can be saved through root canal (endodontic) treatment. Endodontics (end-o-DON-tics) is the branch of dentistry that deals with treating diseases or injuries to the dental pulp. An endodontist is a dentist who specializes in root canal and other endodontic treatments.

What happens if the dental pulp is injured?

The pulp is soft tissue inside the tooth that contains blood vessels and nerves. When the pulp is diseased or injured and unable to repair itself, it dies. The most common causes of pulp death are a cracked tooth, a deep cavity, problems with large fillings, or serious injury to the tooth. All of these can allow bacteria to enter into the pulp.

Diagram of a Healthy Tooth



Why should the pulp be removed?

If the problem pulp is not removed, the tissues around the root of the tooth can become infected, often resulting in pain and swelling. Even if there is no pain, bacteria can damage the bone that anchors the tooth in the jaw. Without treatment, the tooth may have to be pulled.

Produced in cooperation with the American Association of Endodontists, www.aae.org



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C081839

W117

To order additional copies, call 1-800-947-4746
or visit www.adacatalog.org

Root Canal Treatment



Tooth decay can cause an abscessed (infected) tooth.



The decay is removed and an opening is made into the pulp chamber.



The pulp and nerve are removed, and the root canals inside the tooth are cleaned and shaped.



The root canals and pulp chamber are filled.



A metal or plastic rod or post may be placed in the root canal to support the crown.



The crown of the tooth is then restored.



Removing a tooth can create problems

When a tooth is pulled and not replaced, the teeth around it may shift from their normal position. Shifted teeth may make biting and chewing difficult. They may also make it harder to clean your teeth. Areas that are not cleaned well are more likely to get gum disease.

Root canal treatment can prevent these problems by saving your natural tooth. A natural tooth is almost always better than a replacement tooth. Nothing looks, feels or functions like the natural tooth—and being able to chew and enjoy your favorite foods will keep you healthy and confident. Also, a root canal is usually less expensive than a replacement tooth.

What materials are used the crown?

Crowns can be made from several materials. The type chosen depends on where the crown is located in your mouth, the amount of tooth left, your preferences and your dentist's judgment about what is best for you.

How long will the restored tooth last?

A tooth with a root canal filling can last for years. Teeth with root canal fillings, however, become decayed or fractured or get gum disease, just like any other teeth. Daily cleaning and regular exams will help you keep your teeth healthy, whether they've had root canals or not.



What does treatment involve?

Root canal treatment involves one or more visits. There are several steps that your dentist or endodontist will perform to save your tooth:

- **First, your tooth is numbed for your comfort.** The dentist will put a thin sheet of latex rubber over your tooth to keep the tooth dry. An opening is made through the crown of the tooth into the pulp chamber.
- **The tooth's nerve or pulp is then removed** from both the inside of tooth (pulp chamber) and the root canal (the space inside the root). Each root canal is cleaned and shaped so it can be filled.
- **Medicine** may be placed in the pulp chamber and root canal to help get rid of bacteria.
- **A temporary filling will be placed in the opening of the tooth** to stop saliva from getting into the chamber and root canals. You might also be given antibiotics if infection has spread beyond the end of the root(s). *If your dentist prescribes medicine, use it only as directed. If you have any problems with the medicine, call your dentist.*
- During the next stage of treatment, the temporary filling is removed. **The root canals are usually filled with a rubber-like material** to seal them.
- In the final step, **the tooth may be restored by a crown or a filling** to strengthen it and improve the way it looks. If an endodontist performs the root canal treatment, he or she will usually recommend that you return to your general dentist for this step.

It is very important to follow your dentist's directions in setting up your appointments so your root canal treatment is successful.