

# INFORMED CONSENT FOR ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

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Our dental team is here to provide you with the answers you need in regards to root canal treatment. This is an invasive procedure and will require two or more appointments. Feel free to write down any questions you have and ask them at any of your appointments.

Teeth may need root canals for many reasons. The most common causes are a deep cavity, a crack, or traumatic injury to the tooth, all allow bacteria and their products to leak into the pulp. If the injured or diseased pulp tissue is not removed, the tissue surrounding the tooth can become infected and an abscess can form, causing pain and/or swelling.

This treatment will require at least two or more visits. First, we would get you comfortable. That means local anesthetic will be used. In some cases antibiotics are given before we will open the tooth, as infection can negate the anesthetic. Next an opening in the crown of the tooth is made to expose the pulp chamber and canals. The pulp or its remnants are removed from the root canals and the pulp chamber. Then a medication will be placed along with a temporary filling to eliminate bacteria. At the next appointment the temporary filling is removed and a biocompatible material is placed down the canals to prevent repeat infection of the tooth. We then place a build up in the crown of the tooth.

Teeth that have had root canal treatment are brittle and may break. This is because it no longer has a blood supply to it. We encourage all patients that have had root canals to place crowns on those teeth, as it will help protect the teeth from breaking.

The term root canal comes from the removal of the pulp and nerve tissue. We use files to remove this tissue. Pulp and nerve tissue goes down to the apex of the tooth. This is why we file out the roots of the tooth. As with any treatment, there is no guarantee. Root canals occasionally can and will fail. However, their success rate is much higher than that of failure. The files we use are very small and we run the risk of a file breaking in the canal. Many times we can file around it and fill the tooth without any problems. Other cases may need to be referred out to the Endodontist, a root canal specialist. In either case you will be informed. The risk of breaking instruments is small but it can happen. Also, the use of instruments can cause perforation of tooth, roots or sinus. The canals in teeth are very small and some could be calcified, meaning closed or closing. We do our best, but we sometimes can miss canals. Often there are accessory canals that we can not see, as they exit out in the middle of the root. Swelling, sensitivity, bleeding, pain, or infections can occur during the root canal process. Often times referred pain can occur in the ear or even in other parts of your mouth. Sometimes numbness of the tongue, lips or cheek may occur. This is usually temporary, but in rare cases can be permanent. Teeth that need root canals may already be brittle and on all cases we run the risk of root fracture. We take many x-rays to help us diagnose length of roots and for the best fill. However, there is always the possibility of a fill being too short or too long leading to more discomfort. Infections in and around the bone can take longer to heal in some people. Please know that we take all precautions to eliminate these kinds of problems, but dentistry is a practice and a science, not a guarantee.

There are few alternatives to having a root canal. The only other option presented to patients needing root canal treatment is the extraction of the tooth, either way the decision is hard to make. We are here as your dental team to provide you with the best information and treatment for you. Each individual is different and experiences will vary. Please ask you dental professional any questions you may have.

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**Patient's Name**

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**Signature** (parent if patient is under the age of 18)      **Date**

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**Print Name** (parent if patient is under the age of 18)      **Staff Initials**