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ALBERT PLACE
DENTAL REFERRAL CENTRE

Root Canal Therapy



Root Canal Therapy

What is root canal treatment?

Endodontics is the speciality in dentistry concerned with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases or injuries to the dental pulp. The pulp, which some people call the “nerve”, is the soft tissue inside the tooth that contains nerves and blood vessels and is responsible for tooth development. Root canal treatment is a safe and effective means of saving teeth, which would otherwise be lost.

Why is root canal treatment needed?

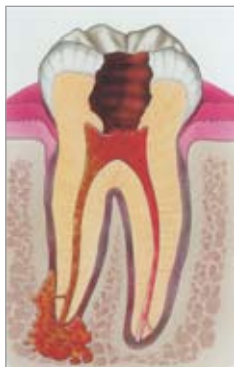
If the pulp becomes infected, the infection may spread through the root canal system of the tooth. This may eventually lead to an abscess. An abscess is an inflamed area in which pus collects and can cause swelling of the tissues around the tooth. The symptoms of an abscess can range from a dull ache to severe pain, and the tooth may be tender when you bite. If root canal treatment is not carried out, the infection will spread and the tooth may need to be taken out.

What does root canal treatment involve?

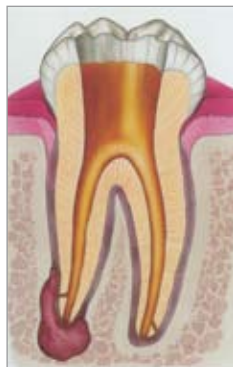
Treatment may require one to three appointments, depending on the diagnosis, the number of roots and the complexity of the case. During the appointments, the clinician removes the injured or diseased pulp tissue. The root canals are cleaned, shaped and sealed to prevent recontamination.

What is the success rate of root canal treatment?

Endodontics is one of the few procedures in dentistry that has a predictable prognosis if treatment is performed correctly. Studies indicate that 90% of treatments are successful.



Infected tooth and abscess



Tooth cleaned and shaped

However, prognosis may vary depending on the specifics of each case. Good oral hygiene and a sound restoration after each case are also essential to prevent treatment failure. Long term follow-up is also required to monitor healing.

What are the alternatives to root canal treatment?

The only alternative would be to extract the tooth, which often leads to shifting of the surrounding teeth and loss of chewing efficiency. The space can often be restored using a removable denture, fixed bridge or implant.

Will the root canal-treated tooth discolour after treatment?

Some endodontically treated teeth appear discoloured due to the influence of previous restorations. For example, white fillings can become stained and amalgam restorations can leak silver ions. In these cases, the fillings are always replaced. However, tooth whitening, veneers or crowns may be necessary to achieve the optimum aesthetic result.

Will the tooth need a crown after treatment?

This depends on the amount of sound tooth structure remaining, plus the type of tooth and amount of chewing force which is likely to occur. Loss of tooth structure significantly weakens the tooth and renders it more susceptible to fracture. Thus, it may be necessary to protect what is left with a restoration such as a crown. Significant loss of tooth structure may necessitate the placement of a post in a root canal to aid the retention of the crown.



Root filling placed



Permanent filling or crown placed