

Root Canal Therapy Information

Root canal therapy (RCT) aims to save teeth that have been affected by decay, disease, or injury. The treatment involves the removal of the infected or inflamed nerve tissue from within the tooth. It is usually carried out under local anesthetic and may take several appointments. Once a tooth requires RCT, it is in such a state that the alternative treatment option is usually extraction. If the tooth is lost, other problems can develop. For example, adjacent teeth can move or tilt into the space left by the missing tooth and lead to problems with chewing, biting, and oral hygiene. RCT is successful in most cases. However, if your Dentist feels success is unlikely, extraction of the affected tooth may be the best option. When this is so, replacement options for the missing tooth will be discussed. These options include dentures, bridges, and implants.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- A local anesthetic is administered to prevent pain.
- A thin sheet of latex may be used to isolate the tooth during treatment.
- To reach the affected nerve, an opening is made in the top of the tooth.
- The root canal or canals are cleaned and shaped with instruments. An anti-bacterial dressing is placed in between appointments. These dressings help prevent infection and inflammation.
- Pain or discomfort may be experienced following RCT appointments. This usually subsides in a day or so and can be relieved by mild analgesics. Not all patients experience this.
- X-rays will be taken before, during, and after RCT to check treatment progress and aid successful treatment.
- Once the tooth is deemed 'clean,' the canals are filled. This seals the canals and helps prevent further infection.
- The tooth is then restored. This definitive restoration is essential to prevent bacteria from re-entering the tooth, causing further infection. The complexity of this restoration will depend on the remaining tooth structure. It can vary from a filling to an artificial crown, which may involve the placement of a post in the canal. You should discuss this with your Dentist before RCT is started.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF RCT

As with any dental or medical procedure, RCT has associated risks and limitations, which may include:

Tooth Loss: RCT can save many teeth, but it is not possible to guarantee success.

Non-treatment factors, including a patient's general health, age, and healing capacity, may also influence the outcome.

Chronic Infection: Infection within the damaged tooth usually heals following treatment. In a small number of cases, the infection can become chronic, and the tooth may need to be retreated or removed or may require referral.

Discoloration: In some people, the treated tooth may darken. If this occurs, options may include bleaching or the use of an artificial crown or veneer.

Pain: Pain may be experienced either between treatment appointments or following treatment. This can usually be relieved by mild analgesics if the pain is severe or lasts longer than a few days contact DentalCareXtra.

Tooth Fracture: A root canal treated tooth will not be as strong as a healthy, vital tooth, and is more likely to fracture in the future. Restoration with a crown where applicable can help prevent this.

Altered Sensation: Your tooth may feel slightly different to the surrounding teeth. This usually disappears with time.

Re-treatment: Occasionally, the re-infection of the tooth may occur with further decay or fracture of the treated tooth, or the initial infection may become chronic. In such cases, re-treatment or referral may be necessary.

Allergy: Allergic reactions to drugs, medication, or anesthetics can occur. If you feel or sense an adverse reaction, stop taking the medication, and contact your Dentist.

Fracture of Root Canal Instruments: Due to the size and possible curvature of root canals, the instruments used to cleanse the canals can bind in the canal, and occasionally fracture. The treatment following instrument fracture will depend upon the stage of treatment. If the canal has been cleaned before the breach occurs, the Dentist may decide to leave the fractured instrument in the canal and allow it to form part of the final filling. If the instrument fractures before the final cleansing of the canal, the instrument may require retrieval if it cannot be bypassed. (This may involve referral to a specialist Endodontist). Alternatively, the decision may be made to remove the tooth.

This information is presented to assist patients in making informed consent before treatment. Should you have any questions on the above or wish to discuss the procedure in greater detail, please contact DentalCareXtra (07) 4954 4477.



Root Canal Treatment Consent

I authorize Dr _____ to perform root canal therapy on tooth/teeth _____ for myself/child _____

Alternatives to root canal therapy have been discussed and offered to me, including:

- No treatment.
- Removal of the tooth.
- Referral to Endodontist
- Other _____

The Dentist has explained the effect and nature of the proposed treatment to me. Where further or alternative measures might be necessary during or as a consequence of the procedure, these will be discussed with me.

I consent to the administration of local anesthetic and antibiotic therapy as required for the treatment. As with any treatment involving the body, there are some inherent risks and limitations. I have been informed of possible risks and complications involved with the procedure, drugs, and anesthesia. Such complications include, but are not limited to:

- Post-treatment discomfort lasting a few hours to several days for which medication may be prescribed if necessary.
- Infection that is not fully resolved during treatment. This may cause swelling in the gum adjacent to the treated tooth or facial swelling.
- The failure rate of up to 10%. If a failure occurs, the treatment may need to be redone, root end surgery may be required, the tooth may need to be extracted, or referral to a specialist may be required.
- Breakage of root canal instruments during treatment. The broken device may, in the judgment of the Dentist, be left in the root canal, or require removal. This may require the assistance of a specialist Endodontist.
- Perforation of the root with instruments, which may require additional corrective surgical treatment referral or may result in premature loss of the tooth.
- The tooth may be weakened following root canal treatment and may need to be supported by the placement of a crown (cap) over the tooth.

I understand that I may be advised to return in several months for a follow-up radiograph (x-ray) to ensure that proper healing is taking place and that failure to do so may result in loss of the tooth due to recurrent infection.

I have been provided with an estimate for the above treatment.

NO WARRANTY OR GUARANTEE HAS BEEN OR CAN BE GIVEN FOR ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

The Dentist has answered all of my questions, and I fully understand the above statements in this consent form.

Patient/Guardian Signature: _____ Date _____

Dentist Signature: _____ Date _____