

## **What is Endodontics (Root Canal Treatment)?**

It is the speciality in dentistry that is concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the dental pulp. The pulp or “nerve” lies inside a tooth in the pulp chamber and root canals.

## **Why Does a Tooth Need Root Canal Treatment?**

When the pulp is injured, diseased and unable to repair itself it becomes inflamed and eventually dies. The most frequent causes of pulp damage are from extensive decay, deep restorations that are leaking, blows to teeth and cracks in the teeth. Bacteria from the decay and saliva can leak into the pulp to cause infection. The infection if left untreated can spread to the tip of the root and out onto the bone, forming an abscess. Pain and swelling will often accompany the infection. Without endodontic treatment the tooth may have to be extracted. Occasionally root canal treatment is carried out in teeth that are very sensitive as a result of gum recession. Sometimes teeth that are to be crowned may be lacking in tooth structure which may be insufficient to retain a crown. Part of the pulp chamber and root canal may have to be used to retain a post and core after root canal treatment.

## **What is the Success Rate of Root Canal Treatment?**

The success rate is generally very high. Studies have quoted figures of 90% to 95% success. Those in the failure group may be amenable to re treatment or surgical treatment however in these cases there is little data to offer guidelines on success rate.

## **Is Root Canal Treatment Painful?**

No, because the dentist will make sure that the tooth is anaesthetised for the procedure. Occasionally teeth that have very inflamed pulps may still be sensitive despite the anaesthetic, in which case the dentist will dress the tooth with a sedative dressing which will calm the “nerve” and make a subsequent procedure much easier and pain free. It is common to have some discomfort after root canal treatment as the infection has been debrided and the body requires a number of days to heal the region at the end of the root of the tooth. This usually means that the tooth is tender to bite on for a few days after but this resolves eventually.

## **What are the Alternatives to Root Canal Treatment?**

The alternative is to extract the tooth if it is causing pain. There is also the option to do nothing about the problem and the dentist can advise on the risks involved.

## **How Many Visits Does the Treatment Involve**

Routine root canal treatment can usually be completed in one visit of up to 1 ½ hours duration. Re-root treatments may take between 1 and 3 visits to complete as the treatment is more involved.

## **What Does Root Canal Treatment Involve?**

Broadly speaking the following steps occur:

- A local anaesthetic is administered.
- The tooth is isolated with a rubber dam (a sort of “mouth mackintosh” where the tooth sticks out to prevent it from contamination from saliva and to protect the patient from swallowing the small instruments and disinfectants used during the procedure).
- An opening is made through the top of the tooth or crown.
- The pulp content is removed with instruments called files and drills.
- An electronic device may be used to measure the length of the root canal.
- Radiographs (“x-rays”) are taken to confirm that the files are at the correct length.
- The canals are shaped and cleaned so they can be filled with gutta percha.
- A temporary restoration is placed subsequently.

## **What are the risks of Root Canal Treatment?**

Although root canal treatment has a 90% success rate sometimes the infection cannot be removed due to blockages of the root canal. These include fractured instruments or dentine debris. In this situation the tooth may require a surgical approach after the initial root canal treatment to remove the affected root tip.

Fracture of the instruments used for cleaning the root canal system can occur. This is quite rare and often does not affect the outcome of treatment.

Your dentist will advise you on the best treatment options should any complications occur.

## **Will the Tooth Need to be Crowned After Root Canal Treatment?**

That depends on the amount of tooth structure remaining after root canal treatment if there is no existing, and the amount of chewing force that the tooth is likely to be subjected. Your dentist will be able to advise you.

**If a Crown is Needed, How Soon Should It Be Provided?**

Generally about 2 to 3 months after the treatment. In some cases it may be as soon as possible. Again your dentist will be able to advise you.

The tooth that you need root canal treatment on is:..UR6.....

The cost of your root canal treatment is included in the treatment plan which accompanies this letter. If there are any changes to your treatment plan you will be notified as soon as possible and any extra costs discussed with you as appropriate.

Crown required: Yes/No Initial..... Date..... (The decision about whether a crown is required can only be made after the tooth is assessed and treated)

Dentist signature:

Name: Dr S. Choudhry

I confirm that the reasons for performing the procedure and the risks involved have been explained to me and I have had a chance to ask questions.

I consent to the above procedure.

**Patient signature:**

**Date:**

**Patient name:**

**Date of Birth:**

**If you have any concerns please contact the practice on 02088705059 or our emergency mobile contact 07775815709.**

