

# Root canal therapy

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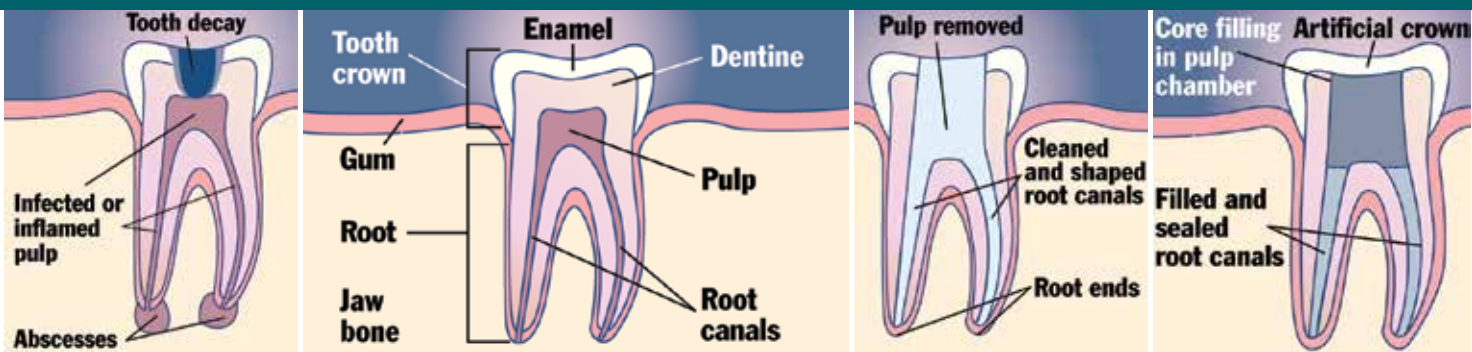
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D E N T A L



## What is root canal therapy?

Root canal therapy, or endodontic treatment, is the process of removing the dead or damaged pulp of a tooth and replacing it with a special filling. Dental pulp is the soft, living tissue found inside a tiny tube called the root canal that extends right to the tip of the tooth's root.

Dental pulp plays an important role in the growth, development and overall health of the tooth. If root canal therapy is required and the subsequent procedure is a success, a fully formed tooth can function normally without its pulp and be kept in place indefinitely.

Some of the reasons why dental pulp becomes damaged or infected include:

- loose filling or crown
- a deep decay
- trauma
- gum disease
- cracked or chipped tooth
- extreme wear or grinding.

Symptoms of pulp damage:

- pain
- sensitivity to hot or cold food or drink
- swollen gums.

Initial inflammation of the pulp will occur if the damaged pulp cannot repair. If this inflammation is left untreated the pulp will die and become infected – from this point root canal therapy is needed to save the tooth. The rate of success of root canal therapy is greatly influenced by how early the treatment is started.

## What is involved in the procedure?

The process for root canal therapy is as follows:

- **Step 1** – An opening is made in the crown of the tooth into the chamber where the pulp is found.

- **Step 2** – The dead or damaged pulp is removed and the root canal cleaned, enlarged and shaped to allow refilling.
- **Step 3** – Medications to prevent infection and inflammation may be put in the root canal and oral antibiotics may be prescribed to help deter infections.
- **Step 4** – A temporary filling is placed on the crown to protect it until your next dental visit.
- **Step 5** – On returning to your dentist, the temporary filling is removed and the pulp chamber and root canal are cleaned and filled.
- **Step 6** – The dentist usually completes the process by placing a new crown (either porcelain or gold) over the tooth to protect, strengthen and seal it, and restore its cosmetic appearance.

## How long does it take?

Root canal therapy generally takes 2 to 3 dental visits depending on the complexity of the case. The final filling usually requires one or two additional appointments.

## Does it hurt?

There may be some short-term pain or discomfort after the root canals have been prepared and after they have been filled. In addition, some people may experience pain or discomfort around the tooth during and following treatment. Your dentist may recommend a pain reliever.

## How long will the restored tooth last?

With proper brushing, flossing and use of toothpaste your restored tooth should last a lifetime. Regular dental checkups will ensure that the tissues surrounding the treated tooth are nourishing the root appropriately.

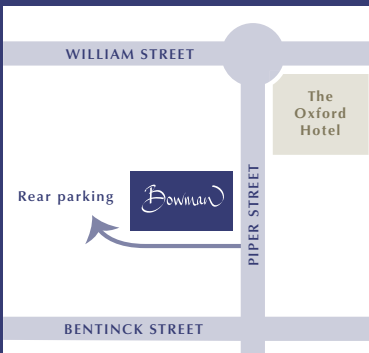


*This card is designed purely as an introduction to root canal therapy. It is not intended to replace advice from a dental professional.*

*If you have any questions please feel free to talk to us in person.*

*We also have pamphlets containing more detailed information on this subject.*

*Kathy & team*



Information courtesy of Australian Dental Association Inc.,  
Mi-tec Media and Dental Outlook Publications.  
Graphics courtesy of Mi-tec Media