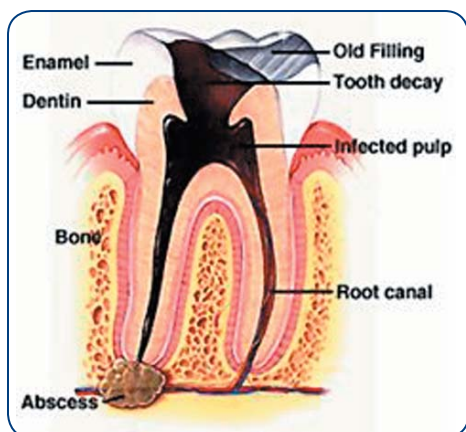


Root Canal Treatment

If your tooth's nerve chamber becomes infected by decay, or damaged by trauma, **root canal treatment** is often the only way to save your tooth.

Inside the hard outer shell of each tooth is a specialized area called the pulp or nerve chamber. The pulp chamber contains a system of blood vessels, lymph vessels and nerves, the pulp, which enter from the bone through the root canals. This system provides nourishment for the cells within the tooth.

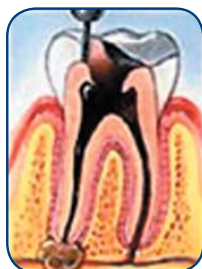
Deep tooth decay or other injury can cause damage to or infection of the tooth pulp. In a root canal or endodontic treatment, the dentist removes the damaged or infected pulp and replaces it with a special filler which helps maintain the remaining tooth structure.



Some indications of the need for root canal treatment may be:

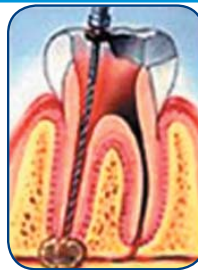
- Spontaneous pain or throbbing while biting.
- Sensitivity to hot and cold foods.
- Severe decay or an injury that creates an abscess (infection) in the bone.

PROCEDURE



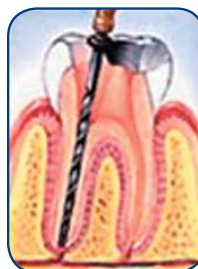
Step 1

After the tooth is anesthetized, an opening is made through the crown into the pulp chamber.



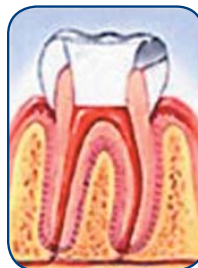
Step 2

The length of the root canals is determined.



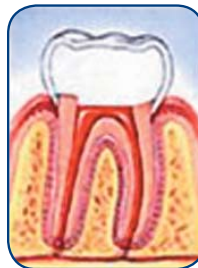
Step 3

Unhealthy pulp is removed. Canals are cleaned, enlarged and shaped.



Step 4

Canals are filled and sealed. A metal post may be added for structural support or to retain restorative materials.



Step 5

The tooth is sealed with a temporary filling. Usually a gold or porcelain crown adds further protection.

The material used to fill your root canal will probably last you a lifetime, but eventually the filling or crown may need to be replaced.

Be sure to follow the special home care instructions provided by your dental professional.