



What is root canal treatment, and why might I need this?

Root canal treatment (or endodontics) is needed when the nerves and blood vessels of the tooth (the pulp) are infected through tooth decay or injury.

When the pulp becomes infected, the nerve of the tooth will begin to die. The infection may spread down the root canal of the tooth, into the bone at the tip of the root, and may eventually lead to an abscess. An abscess is an inflamed area in which pus collects and can cause pain and swelling of the tissues around the tooth.

In the early stages of the infection you may not feel any pain, however the symptoms of an abscess can range from a dull ache to severe pain and the tooth may be tender when you bite.

Sometimes the infection can

progress to the point where the swelling threatens to block the airway, causing difficulty breathing. Abscesses can also make you generally ill with fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

In order to save the tooth, and eliminate the infection, you would need root canal treatment. If root canal treatment is not carried out, the infection will spread and the tooth may need to be extracted.

Root canal treatment is carried out under local anaesthetic and should feel no different to having an ordinary filling done. There may be some tenderness afterwards but this should gradually lessen over time.

Many patients go to the dentist for an emergency appointment, get a

course of antibiotics and start to feel much better. Then, because they feel well, they don't return to have the root canal treatment. However, without root canal treatment, the infected tissue remains inside the tooth causing the infection to spread again and the problem returns. Delaying treatment also reduces the prospects of success and it may prove impossible for your dentist to save the tooth at a later stage.

If you have any questions about root canal treatment, please speak to a member of the practice team.

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Quite Interesting... Did you know about one in every 2000 babies is born with one or more natal teeth? So sometimes baby's first dental appointment is only a few days after birth. Natal teeth usually grow on the bottom gums and tend to have weak roots; they're often removed to prevent problems with breastfeeding and accidental swallowing. Napoleon, Hannibal, Richard III and Julius Caesar were all said to be born with teeth... Well I never!

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