



# Patient Instructions After Root Canal Therapy (RCT)

Root canal treatment is our way of preventing pain and infection in your teeth and jaw. It receives the most negative press of any of our dental treatments. It is the whipping boy of all dental jokes. Yet it doesn't deserve its notoriety.

Root canals refer to the parts of the tooth that dentists call the pulp chamber. Within the center of your teeth is a space or chamber that contains live dental tissue called the pulp tissue. This pulp tissue is made up of blood vessels that keep the pulp alive, dental specific tissue that can repair some damage the tooth experiences from decay and nerve fibers that send pain signals to your brain.

When your tooth has had extensive decay or injury (due to drilling or trauma) the pulp tissue becomes bruised. This bruising can lead to a pressure increase inside the pulp chamber. If the pressure increase is great enough, then the blood circulation in the pulp chamber ceases, and the pulp tissue dies. The problem is that the nerve fibers are the last to die and they let you know it.

Root canal treatment or "Endodontics" lets the dentist get rid of all of the pulp tissue gently and thoroughly and fill the remaining empty pulp chamber with a rubber like material that is cemented and condensed into the cleaned pulp chamber. This prevents infection from starting up in the empty pulp space and makes the tooth comfortable for the rest of your life.

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ROOT CANAL THERAPY

### ***Will I need to take antibiotics?***

Depending on the amount of active infection present in your tooth, you may be prescribed antibiotics. Please take them as directed by Dr. Rader.

### ***Did you remove my tooth's root?***

Root canal treatment (RCT) cleans, shapes and fills the canal system inside your tooth. The root structure that held your tooth in place is still there and intact. We have just sealed the spaces within it.

### ***Will my tooth be sore after treatment?***

After receiving treatment the area around the root tips of the treated tooth will be bruised and may cause some tenderness to biting pressure. It may be sore even without any chewing. This is all due to pressure building in the bone around the tooth's roots with bruising. Till this bruising goes away (usually in 3 to 5 days) Ibuprofen (also known as Advil or Motrin) will keep your tooth comfortable. Take as directed.

### ***Do I need a crown on my tooth?***

Your tooth is in a weakened state due to the RCT. A hole has been made in the tooth to gain access to the pulp chamber. That decreases the structural strength of the tooth and makes it more susceptible to fracturing a portion of the tooth away when chewing. You can split the tooth in two or fracture it in such a way that gum surgery is needed. It is important that you are careful chewing in this area.

A crown should be done in a prudent time frame. I always tell my patients that they should have their tooth crowned the day before they bite down and break it!

***If you do a Root Canal through my crown, will I need a new one?***

Not necessarily. Often we can repair the crown when we have to make a hole through it. The hole must be repaired though. Sometimes a new crown is required. If you are unsure discuss it with our office.

**IMPORTANT PANDEMIC INFORMATION**

Since your dental care team has been in close contact with you during your procedure, please notify our office if you experience symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of your visit so that we can take measures to curtail the spread of any virus. It is for our health and safety as well as the safety of those who visit the practice.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

Should you have any additional questions or concerns about your procedure, please contact our practice.