

What is a Root Canal Treatment?

When the pulp (nerve) of a tooth is damaged, infected or inflamed, root canal treatment is needed to save the tooth. Treatment involves removing the pulp and sealing the cavity. A crown is then required to provide support to the weakened tooth- either porcelain or gold are recommended by our Practice.

When is Root Canal Treatment required?

If any of the following symptoms occur, you might require Root Canal Treatment:

- tooth becomes painful
- tender to bite on tooth
- tooth is particularly sensitive to heat and cold
- an obvious large cavity (hole) in the tooth
- tooth suddenly becomes dark in colour.

However, the pulp of the tooth may sometimes die without causing noticeable pain. Regular six monthly dental examinations will help you from such problems going undetected.

What happens in Root Canal Treatment?

Under a local anaesthetic, the remains of the nerve are cleaned through a small hole in the crown of the tooth. Thin files are used, together with cleaning solutions. X-rays are taken in the process to determine the length of the canal or canals in the tooth. A sealant is placed in the canal before the tooth is to be crowned. More than 80% of root treatments are successful. It has been explained to me the methods and manner of the proposed treatment, the alternatives to Root Canal Treatment and the possible complication, including, but not limited to the following:

- Post-treatment discomfort lasting a few hours to several days for which medication may be prescribed if necessary.
- Post-treatment swelling of the gum in the vicinity of the tooth, or facial swelling, either of which may persist for several days or longer.
- Infection.
- Trismus (restriction of jaw opening) which usually lasts several days but may last longer.
- If any unexpected difficulties occur during treatment, I may refer you to an Endodontist. Failure rate of 5%-10%. (If failure occurs the treatment may have to be redone, root-end surgery may be required, or the tooth may have to be extracted).
- Breakage of the root canal instruments during treatment, which may, in the judgement of the dentists, be left in the treated root or require surgery for removal.
- Perforation of the root canal with instruments which may require additional corrective surgical treatment or result in pre-mature tooth loss or extraction.
- Premature tooth loss due to progressive periodontal (gum) disease in the surrounding or supporting area.

