



## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS REGARDING ROOT CANAL TREATMENTS

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*In order for you as patient to understand this section better we would like to explain to you what pulpal tissue consists of;* Firstly the tooth is protected on the outside by a layer of enamel. This is the hardest part of the tooth, and also the hardest part for decay to penetrate. Underneath the enamel is the dentine, which is much softer and consists of millions of little tubes which are in contact with the pulp chamber. The pulp chamber is in the centre of the tooth and consists of nerves, blood vessels, cells etc.

- An abscess on a tooth usually occurs when the pulpal tissues of a tooth has been inflamed for some time and caused the pulpal contents to die down and cause infection. This usually leads to a build-up of pressure in the bone surrounding the tooth which then usually leads to severe pain. The teeth are often sensitive to hot and/or cold and especially to pressure.
- A Root Canal Treatment is usually required when a tooth has developed an abscess or the pulpal tissues of the tooth has become irreversibly inflamed. This is usually caused by decay being very close to- or having penetrated the pulp chamber and therefore leading to inflammation, but it can also be caused by other factors e.g. trauma, cracks in the tooth, grinding of teeth, very deep fillings or heavily restored teeth and more. There are other reasons for carrying out a Root Canal Treatment on a tooth which your dentist will discuss with you should it be appropriate.
- A Root Canal Treatment is an extremely complex procedure which involves getting access to the pulp chamber of the specific tooth and carefully removing the contents of the pulp chamber from inside the tooth and from inside each of the roots of the tooth. It does not involve removing the actual roots of the tooth. After the contents inside the pulp chamber has been removed, the pulp chamber and root canals (inside each of the roots) are thoroughly cleaned out and sealed up. After a Root Canal Treatment has been completed, a filling can be placed in the tooth, however, as the tooth is usually more prone to breaking after a Root Canal Treatment, it is often advisable to have a crown (cap) manufactured for the tooth which covers the visible part of the tooth and usually prevents the tooth from breaking.
- Root Canal Treatments can occasionally be painful, especially when a tooth has a very painful abscess, however there are several measures that can be taken to try and keep pain to a minimum.
- Even though Root Canal Treatments are usually successful, success cannot be guaranteed. It varies from individual to individual, and depends on that persons' response to the Root Canal Treatment. It is merely one of the last possible steps to save an otherwise compromised tooth. Should the Root Canal Treatment not be successful, the specific tooth may require extraction.
- Please ask your dentist for more information on Root Canal Treatments.