

Why Root Canal Therapy?

The goals of root canal therapy are to:

1. Remove bacteria and infected pulp from the pulp chamber and root canals;
2. Completely fill the canal(s) and pulp chamber with a solid filling material to prevent future trouble.

When root canal therapy is done, inflammation in the bone around the root ends can heal, and the tooth is saved.

PROCEDURE:

Preparation:

Step 1: Opening the tooth: the dentist gently makes an opening into the tooth. Local anesthetic (freezing) may be necessary to prevent pain that can occur if any nerve fibers are still alive in the pulp. All tooth decay is removed.

Step 2: Shaping the canals: The dentist uses a series of very delicate, flexible finger-held instruments (files). Each file the dentist uses is slightly larger than the preceding one. The canals are delicately cleaned with these instruments to remove dead pulp debris and bacteria. The dentist then shapes each canal to receive a filling.

* Canal preparation may take several visits, especially for difficult curved or narrow canals.

After preparation, all canals must be solidly filled. Otherwise, tissue fluid from the bone could eventually seep into any unfilled areas of the canal, decaying there into toxic products. These toxic products will then seep out of the root end into the bone to cause more inflammation.

Filling the canals:

The most commonly used filling material is a firm, waxy, rubbery compound called gutta-percha. It is manufactured into long, thin, tapering cones called gutta-percha points.

Step 1: The first gutta-percha point is inserted into the prepared canal. It matches the size of the last and largest file used.

Step 2: The dentist coats this point with a special liquid cement. The coated point is then inserted firmly to the end of the canal so that no fluid can leak past it.

Step 3: The dentist now packs the remaining portion of each canal with gutta-percha pieces up to the level of the pulp chamber.

Step 4: Lastly, the dentist fills the tooth with a temporary protective cement.

*Text source: Why Root Canal Therapy – In Office Guide by Quintessence Publishing