



Questions and Answers about Endodontic Treatment.

Who is an Endodontist?

An Endodontist is a dentist that has received advanced training in order to specialize in saving teeth by performing root canals. All Endodontist have four years of college, four years of dental school, and have an additional 2-3 years in residency. All have earned either a certificate or Masters Degree in their specialty.

What is a root canal?

A root canal is a procedure that is done in order to save a tooth. A root canal is when the soft tissue inside the roots is removed. A common misconception is that the "roots" are removed during a root canal, but this is not true. The tissues within the roots are removed.

Why is there a need for endodontic treatment?

Sometimes the pulp inside your tooth becomes inflamed or infected. This can be caused by deep decay, repeated dental procedures on the tooth, a crack or chip in the tooth, or a blow to the tooth.

What are the signs of needing endodontic treatment?

Signs to look for include pain, prolonged sensitivity to heat or cold, discoloration of the tooth, and swelling and tenderness in the nearby gums. But sometimes, there are no symptoms.

How does endodontic treatment save the tooth?

The endodontist removes the inflamed or infected pulp, carefully cleans and shapes the inside of the tooth, then fills and seals the space. Afterwards, you return to your general dentist, who will place a crown or other restoration on the tooth to protect it and restore it to full function.

What if I am allergic to Latex?

We carry non latex gloves and dental dams. No worries there.

How long does the procedure take?

The length of treatment depends on the tooth involved and the complexity of the case. Most treatment can be completed in 60 to 90 minutes or less.

Would it be better just to have the tooth extracted?

Saving your natural teeth, whenever possible, is the very best option. Endodontic treatment, along with appropriate restoration, is a cost-effective way to treat teeth with damaged pulp and is usually less expensive than extraction and placement of a bridge or an implant.

Because I was referred to an endodontist, does this mean that I definitely need a root canal?

No. Dentists refer patients to an endodontist to help determine the cause of tooth pain or determine the status of a particular tooth. The endodontist will first make a careful diagnosis. In some cases, the patient and the referring dentist are informed that root canal therapy is not needed.

What can I expect during treatment?

Your Endodontist will numb you, so that you will not feel any pain. You will then have the tooth being worked on isolated with a little sheet of latex called a dental dam. The dental dam protects your airway and allows a sterile field for your root canal to be performed. The dental dam keeps you from swallowing any debris and keeps your tongue out of your Endodontist's way

I didn't have any problems until after my dentist placed a crown. Why do I need a root canal now?

It is not necessary or desirable to perform root canal treatment on each and every tooth that needs a crown. However, in a small percentage of cases, root canal treatment is needed after a crown is placed in order to save the tooth.

Does root canal treatment hurt?

Root canal treatment does not cause pain, it relieves it. Most patients see their dentist immediately when they have a severe toothache. The toothache can be caused by damaged tissues in the tooth. Root canal treatment removed this damaged tissue from the tooth, thereby relieving the pain you feel. IN other cases, root canal therapy is indicated when the patient has no symptoms in order to prevent problems in the future and save the tooth.

Will there be pain following the treatment?

Patients occasionally experience some residual soreness after the procedure. Following treatment, over-the-counter medication is recommended.

How many visits are involved to complete root canal treatment?

The endodontist makes this determination on a case-by-case basis. Most treatments can be completed in one or two visits.

How soon can I return to work following treatment?

Most patients can resume their usual activities the day after the treatment, and some patients who have treatment in the morning go to work in the afternoon.

My dentist already took x-rays. Why do I need additional x-rays in your office?

Your dentist usually takes x-rays to detect cavities; the endodontist takes special x-rays to view the roots of the teeth. These images assist the endodontist in making an accurate diagnosis.

How much does root canal treatment cost?

The fee depends on the tooth involved and the number of visits required. At the time of your examination appointment with the endodontist, there will be a full discussion of fees so that you will know what to expect prior to treatment.

Is root canal treatment covered by my dental insurance?

Our office works with a number of dental benefit plans. Individual plans vary and specific levels of coverage should be verified through your insurance provider. Patient financing plans are also available.

Is root canal treatment usually successful?

Endodontic treatment has a very high success rate. Many root canal treated teeth last a lifetime. Millions of healthy endodontically treated teeth serve patients all over the world, years and years after treatment. Those healthy teeth are helping patients chew efficiently, maintain the natural appearance of their smile and enhance their enjoyment of life. Through endodontic treatment, endodontists enable patients to keep their natural teeth for a lifetime.

What about after the root canal?

Every person and every root canal is different. Many of our patients just take over the counter analgesic after their procedure, like Advil, Tylenol, Alleve or Aspirin. Your Endodontist may prescribe an antibiotic if you have an infected tooth. If so, please take all of the prescription, in order for it to work like it should. You may also receive a prescription for pain medication. Be sure and go to the pharmacy before your anesthetic wears off to get it filled. You were given a prescription to prevent you from having any pain or discomfort after your root canal.

We look forward to seeing you. If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact one of our offices.

Endodontic Associates, P.A. wishes to acknowledge and thank the American Association of Endodontists for some of the information provided above.