

ROOT CANAL THERAPY AT DIANA DENTAL

WHAT IS IT?

Root canal therapy (also referred to as RCT, root filling or Endodontics) is needed when the blood or nerve supply of the tooth (known as the pulp) becomes infected through decay or injury. You may not feel any pain in the early stages of infection. In some cases the tooth may darken in colour which may mean that the nerve of the tooth has died or is dying. This is when root canal therapy is required.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

If the pulp becomes infected, the infection may spread through the root canal system of the tooth, this may ultimately lead to an abscess which is an inflamed area that can cause swelling of the tissues around the tooth. Symptoms of an abscess can range from a dull ache to severe, very unpleasant pain. If root therapy is not carried out, the infection will spread and you may need to have the tooth removed.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

The treatment involves removal of all the infection from the root canal. You may be given a course of antibiotics prior to any treatment to assist in the removal of the infection. An x-ray is normally taken which will show the number and shape of the root canals of the problem tooth, and also areas of infection in the surrounding bone. The treatment will involve the root being thoroughly cleaned and filled to prevent re-infection. Most root canal treatments will involve 1 – 2 visits. Front teeth normally have one root but back teeth have more so the procedure can be more time consuming and difficult.

Once the root has been cleaned & filled the tooth will normally be dressed with a temporary filling and left to settle for a short time. The tooth is then checked at a later visit and it can then be permanently restored with a filling or a crown unit.

Root canal treatment is usually very successful. However, if the infection returns, the root canal therapy procedure can be repeated. Most root canal procedures can be carried out by the dentist but in some more difficult cases you may need to be referred to an 'Endodontist' who specialises in this type of treatment.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ROOT CANAL TREATMENT?

The alternative is to have the tooth removed. Once the tooth pulp is destroyed it can't heal and it's not recommended to leave an infected tooth in the mouth.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE TREATMENT?

Following root therapy the tooth becomes more brittle. Although the tooth may have been restored initially with a filling, this may not be sufficient for the long term and it may need to be replaced with a crown unit (cap) to provide extra support and strength to the tooth.

Root filled teeth should be treated exactly the same as any natural teeth. Brush them normally for at least two minutes, twice a day. Cut down on sugary food & drink and see your dentist & hygienist regularly.