

What does treatment involve?

Treatment involves one or more visits. There are several steps in the process of endodontic treatment that your general dentist or endodontist will perform to save your tooth.

- First, local anesthesia is usually given so that you will be more comfortable. To isolate the tooth, the dentist will use a dam, which is a thin sheet of latex rubber or plastic that keeps the tooth dry during treatment. An opening is made through the crown of the tooth into the pulp chamber.

- The pulp or remaining tissue is then removed carefully from both the pulp chamber and root canal(s). Each root canal is cleaned and shaped to allow it to be filled.

Medication may be placed in the pulp chamber and root canal(s) to help eliminate bacteria.

- A temporary filling may be placed in the crown opening to prevent saliva from entering the chamber and root canals, or your dentist may immediately begin the next stage of filling the root canal(s) (described below). You might also be given antibiotics if infection is present and has spread beyond the end of the root(s). *If your dentist has prescribed medication, use it only as directed. If you have any problems with the medication, call your dentist.*

- During the next stage of treatment, after placement of a rubber dam, the temporary filling is removed (if one was placed at an earlier visit). The root canal(s) are usually filled with gutta-percha, a rubber-like material made from various tropical trees.



It is very important to follow your dentist's directions regarding the scheduling of your dental appointments so that your root canal treatment will be successful.

- In the final step, the temporary filling is removed and the tooth may be restored by a crown or a filling to strengthen it and improve its appearance. A crown may be made of porcelain or metal alloy, and the filling may be made of many different materials. If an endodontist performs the root canal treatment, he or she will usually recommend that you return to your general dentist for the final restoration.

Root Canal Treatment



Tooth decay can cause an abscessed (infected) tooth.



The decay is removed and an opening is made through the crown of the tooth into the pulp chamber.



The pulp is removed, and the root canals are cleaned and shaped.



The root canals and pulp chamber are filled.



A metal or plastic rod or post may be placed in the root canal to help retain the core (filling) material, which supports the restoration (crown).



The crown of the tooth is then restored. If bone is lost due to infection at the root tip, this will heal over several months after the root canal is cleaned and sealed.