

WHAT IS A ROOT CANAL TREATMENT?

A root canal is needed when damage occurs to a tooth's pulp. This can happen due to injury or due to severe tooth decay. A root canal is often a dreaded procedure but this can be an alternative to a tooth extraction and can be a very effective way to eliminate tooth pain.

The extent of the procedure and effectiveness will depend on how extensive the tooth damage is. During the procedure, the area is assessed and then the damaged and / or dead pulp is removed and the area is then sealed. Your dentist will likely prescribe medication to you after the procedure to aid in the healing process. The tooth that was treated may be tender during the healing process, but most of the pain will soon resolve and you will be glad you took the necessary steps to save your tooth.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE THE TOOTH PULLED INSTEAD?

If you choose not to save your tooth with a root canal, and to have the tooth pulled (extracted), then this may cause more problems. Once a tooth is missing from your mouth, the teeth on either side of the space will shift. In addition, the tooth opposing the space will move (supererupt) into the missing space and you may have to get that tooth extracted in the future. The missing tooth needs to be replaced with some other type of treatment which will cost you additional time and money. Some options to fill the space of a missing tooth are: Implants, Bridges, or Partial Dentures.

WHAT IS NEEDED AFTER A ROOT CANAL?

After a root canal, you should consider having a crown placed over the tooth as this will help prevent tooth breakage. This is especially helpful if extensive restoration was done, leaving a thin shell of a tooth. If pain, swelling, and other problems occur after root canal treatment, you may need to meet with your dentist again to determine whether or not further work needs to be done.