

Root Canal Treatment



CANADIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION
DENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

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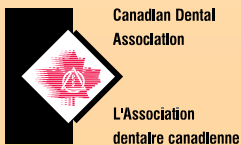
The CDA would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this edition of *Root Canal Treatment*:
on behalf of the Canadian Academy of Endodontics,
Dr. Howard Fogel.

The CDA would also like to thank:

Dr. Tom Breneman
Dr. Chantal Fortier
Dr. Patricia Main
Dr. Elizabeth Van Heyst.

The CDA is grateful to **Colgate-Palmolive** for its generous support of the D.I.S. **Colgate-Palmolive's** sponsorship has made this program possible. The D.I.S. booklets are produced and distributed by **Canadian Dental Service Plans Inc.**

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Colgate



Root Canal Treatment

Dentists today believe that the best teeth are your own, and they try their best to make sure you do not lose any of them. Successful root canal treatment lets you keep your tooth. The only other option is to have your tooth removed.

Keeping your tooth helps to prevent your other teeth from drifting out of line and causing jaw problems or gum disease. Saving a natural tooth avoids having to replace it with either a bridge or an implant.

This booklet is about root canal treatment.

Here's what you will learn about in this booklet:

- ▶ *What is root canal treatment?* page 2
- ▶ *When root canal treatment is needed* page 3
- ▶ *Dentists and root canal treatment* page 4
- ▶ *How it is done* page 5
- ▶ *Things to consider* page 7
- ▶ *Root canal retreatment and root canal surgery* page 9



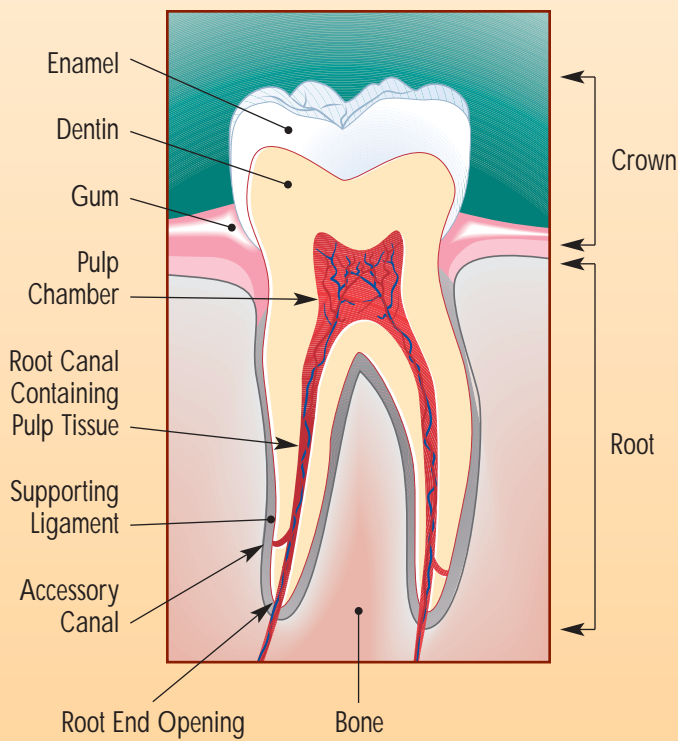
What is root canal treatment?

Teeth are made up of three hard layers:

- enamel
- dentin, and
- cementum

There is a space inside the hard layers of each tooth. It is called the root canal system and it is filled with soft dental pulp. This pulp is made up of

nerves and blood vessels that help the tooth grow and develop. Once a tooth is fully grown, it can survive without a pulp. If the pulp of a tooth becomes infected, then a root canal (or **endodontic** treatment) is needed. When this is done, the pulp is removed.



A healthy tooth

When root canal treatment is needed

The pulp inside a tooth can be damaged by cracks in the tooth, deep cavities or accidents.

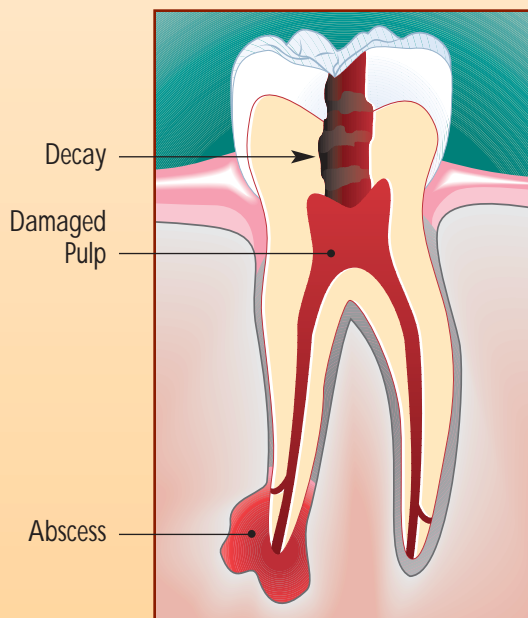
Germ (or bacteria) can get into the tooth and can lead to infected tooth pulp. This may cause pain and/or swelling. Sometimes, a pulp becomes infected or dies, but does not cause any pain. Your dentist may notice:

- changes in the colour of the tooth,

- changes in your gums or
- changes picked up by a dental x-ray.

Sometimes, if a great deal of dental work is needed, your dentist can tell from your exam and x-rays that the pulp of a tooth is not likely to survive.

In all these cases, root canal treatment can ease or prevent symptoms, and save the tooth.



An abscessed tooth