

Root Canal Treatment



CANADIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION
DENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

The **Dental Information System (D.I.S.)** is a series of booklets by the Canadian Dental Association (CDA).

The CDA is the national organization of the dental profession. The CDA's goal is that you have the best dental health possible. The D.I.S. can help you reach this goal.

The booklets in the D.I.S. are:

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- *Restoring and Replacing Your Teeth*
- *Root Canal Treatment*
- *Taking Care of Cavities*
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To learn even more about your dental health, talk to your dentist. To learn more about the CDA, visit our web site at www.cda-adc.ca.

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on behalf of the Canadian Academy of Endodontics,
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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



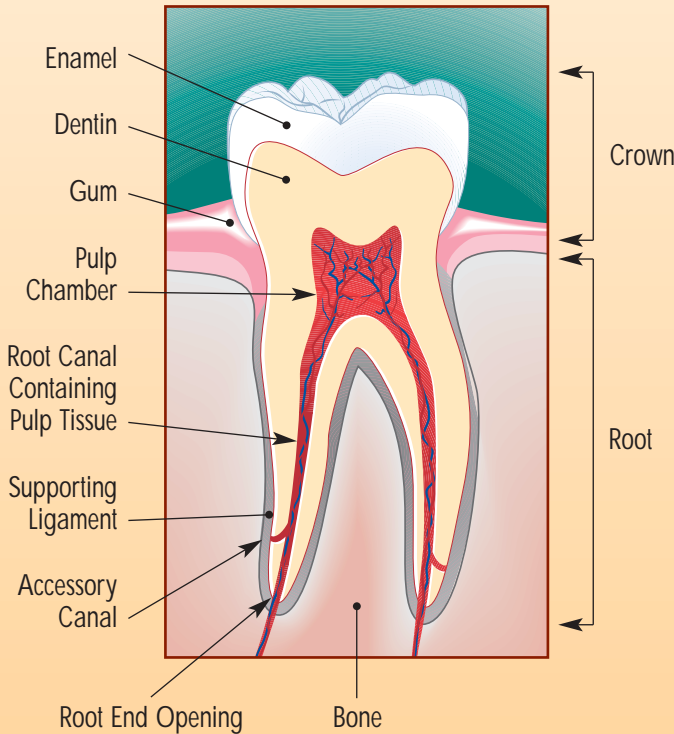
What is root canal treatment?

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.

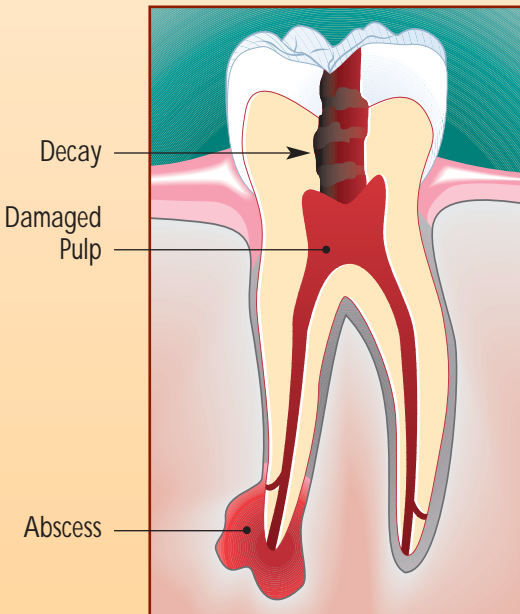
Germ (or bacteria) can get into the tooth and can lead to infected tooth pulp. This may cause pain and/or swelling. Sometimes, a pulp becomes infected or dies, but does not cause any pain. Your dentist may notice:

- 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