

Root canal therapy

Rest assured, modern dentistry has made this much-maligned procedure a simple and painless process.

Root canal therapy-or "endodontic treatment"-is the treatment of teeth that have nerve damage. This may be due to decay, disease or injury.

Root canal therapy is less involved, less expensive and less traumatic than extraction and replacement. And it preserves the natural tooth.

Each year in Australia, many thousands of smiles and bites are saved by root canal therapy.

Procedure

Root canal therapy is typically completed over one to two appointments.

Initially, an X-ray is taken and a local anaesthetic administered. An opening is drilled through the crown of the tooth, exposing the nerve and dental pulp. The infected or damaged nerve is removed, then the root canal is cleaned out, enlarged and shaped.

Though this may sound somewhat gruesome, today's highly specialised endodontic technology has minimised the discomfort and the time you need to spend in the chair. And the potential relief the procedure offers will give you and your problem tooth a new lease on life.

An interim sedative dressing is placed in the tooth between visits. The root canal and pulp chamber are filled with a warm, natural rubber compound. An antibacterial agent may also be inserted to prevent reinfection. Finally, the tooth is sealed.

Additional X-rays are taken throughout the procedure. Your dentist will show you these and explain the treatment as it progresses.

Further treatment

A tooth that has undergone root canal therapy may not be as strong as before-this is particularly the case for the back teeth.

The tooth may therefore require a reinforced restoration, such as a crown. Your dentist will discuss this with you.

See how new technology at Smile Dental is streamlining root canal therapy ...

- Laser dentistry

See also ...

- Crowns

- Post-operative care