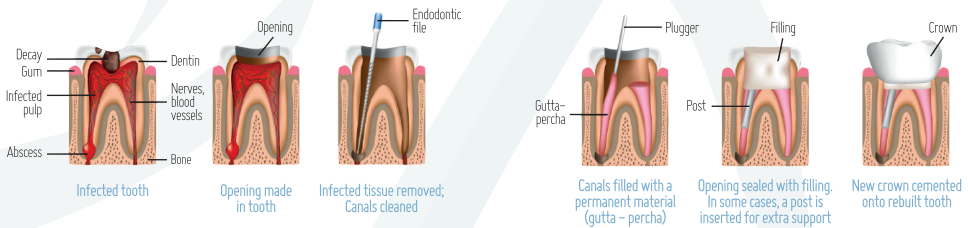


# Root Canal Treatment



## How do I know if I need root canal treatment?

The following symptoms may indicate that your tooth requires root canal treatment (also known as a root filling or endodontics):

- ⑦ Constant pain in tooth not relieved with painkillers
- ⑦ Swelling of gum next to your tooth
- ⑦ Pain on biting
- ⑦ Pain made worse by hot drinks but relieved by cold drinks

## What is Root Canal Treatment?

Teeth are held in the jaws by their roots. Front teeth normally have one root, but teeth towards the back of the mouth have more. Inside each root is a channel that runs the length of the tooth. This channel is the root canal and contains the pulp (nerves, blood vessels, and soft tissue), which is often referred to as the “nerve” of the tooth.

Injury or decay can destroy the living pulp. Once the pulp dies, it lacks blood supply, which means it is more prone to infection, leading to an abscess and toothache. Root canal treatment (RCT) involves removing the damaged or dead pulp and filling the space left. The remaining tooth will then be repaired.

## What will my dentist do?

Firstly, your dentist will discuss the options you have available within the practice. You may opt to have root canal undertaken within the NHS, Privately or be referred to a Specialist (please ask your dentist, and he/she will discuss the options in more detail).

An x-ray will be taken to assess the number and shape of the root canals and to indicate any signs of infection in the surrounding bone. Teeth can have a number of root canals, and some are easier to fill than others because of their shape.

The dentist will give a local anaesthetic, and then proceed with the treatment. It is important that the root canals are kept dry during the treatment, so the dentist may apply a rubber dam to the tooth (subject to their being sufficient remaining tooth tissue). This is a thin sheet of rubber which is stretched over the tooth and held in place by a small frame outside the mouth. This often makes treatment more comfortable.

A small opening will be made in the top of the tooth, allowing the dentist to use delicate files to remove the dead or damaged pulp from the tooth and root canals. At this point the dentist may decide that a further appointment is needed to complete the treatment, so a temporary filling will be placed and an appointment scheduled to finish the procedure.

At the next stage, the temporary filling will be removed and all of the root canals filled. The dentist will decide if it is necessary to have a filling on top of the tooth or a crown/veneer to help support the remaining tooth tissue. Root-filled teeth can become darker than other teeth, but bleaching can be undertaken to make them appear lighter. If you have a tooth which has darkened as a result of root canal treatment, then please ask your dentist about our internal whitening procedures.

## What are the benefits?

Damage to the pulp can cause a toothache but the pain will usually end very quickly once the nerve has been taken out of the tooth. Without a root filling, a tooth with a dead pulp would probably have to be extracted. There is a possibility of the infection spreading beyond the tooth itself.

Endodontic treatment saves a tooth that would otherwise have to be extracted and prevents the need for more costly bridge or implant replacements. If an infected pulp is not treated, it will lead to pain and potentially swelling and abscess formation. The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic. You may suffer some sensitivity afterwards, which normally settles down in 12 to 24 hours and can be relieved with painkillers.

Root fillings are usually successful and can last many years, but re-treatment is also possible if infection reoccurs. Occasionally, if the infection persists at the tip of the root, surgery can be carried out to remove part of the root, clean the area and place a filling. This procedure is known as an apicectomy and is a last resort to try and save a tooth. Sometimes it may be difficult to save your tooth, and it may require extraction. If your tooth is unable to be saved, your dentist will be happy to discuss the options available to replace the tooth, such as a bridge, removable denture or a dental implant.

# WITH PROPER RESTORATION AND CARE, A ROOT FILLED TOOTH MAY LAST A LIFETIME

## Why have I been referred to a Dentist with a Specialist interest in Endodontics?

Your dentist may undertake endodontic treatment but it is not uncommon for more complicated cases to be referred to a Dentist with a special interest (DWSI) who has further training and equipment in this area. Within our group of practices, Dr Tom Brannen is our DWSI in Endodontics. He dedicates some of his weekly practice solely to endodontics and uses his additional training and experience to treat these difficult cases. This may be teeth with narrow or blocked canals, unusual anatomy, retreatment teeth where the previous root canal treatment has been unsuccessful or undertaking endodontic surgery.

Dr Brannen will undertake root canal treatment using advanced techniques and technology including an operating dental microscope and 3D imaging technology. Furthermore, he will spend the time to talk through your individual treatment options and answer any questions you may have.



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OVER **90%**

Success rates for first time root canal treatments performed by a specialist endodontist or DWSI

**80%**

Success rates when an existing root treatment needs redoing if it has failed