



## Root Canal Therapy

Root canal treatment is the removal of the tooth's pulp, a small, thread-like tissue in the centre of the tooth. Once the damaged, diseased or dead pulp is removed, the remaining space is cleaned, shaped and filled. This procedure seals off the root canal. Years ago, teeth with diseased or injured pulps were removed. Today, root canal treatment saves many teeth that would otherwise be lost.

The most common causes of pulp damage or death are:

- A cracked tooth
- A deep cavity
- An injury to a tooth, such as a severe knock to the tooth, either recent or in the past

Once the pulp is infected or dead, if left untreated, pus can build up at the root tip in the jawbone, forming an abscess. An abscess can destroy the bone surrounding the tooth and cause pain.

As there is no longer a pulp keeping the tooth alive, root-treated teeth can become brittle and are more prone to fracture. This is an important consideration when deciding whether to crown or fill a tooth after root canal treatment.

To determine the success or failure of root canal treatment, the most relied-upon method is to compare new X-rays with those taken prior to treatment. This comparison will show whether bone continues to be lost or is being regenerated.

## Steps Involved in Root Canal Therapy

1. An opening is made through the crown of the tooth into the chamber where the pulp is found.

2. The pulp is removed, and the root canal/s are cleaned and shaped into a form that can be filled easily.
3. Medications to prevent infection may be placed in the pulp chamber.
4. We may leave the tooth open in order for it to drain, however often a temporary filling is placed in the crown of the tooth to protect it until your next visit. Antibiotics may be prescribed to help prevent infection.
5. The temporary filling will be removed, and after cleaning, the pulp chamber and root canal/s will be filled.
6. Finally, we may place a crown (either porcelain or gold) over your tooth.

Information from [www.colgate.com](http://www.colgate.com)