

Root Canal Therapy

Endodontics or **root canal therapy** is a process where the nerve and associated blood-vessels and lymphatics are removed from the tooth and replaced with an inert rubber material called *gutta percha*.

The most common reasons for needing a root canal are:

- extensive tooth decay
- a large cavity under a filling or crown
- a dental abscess
- the fracture of a tooth.

When we suspect that the nerve is dead, we will take an x-ray to determine if there is an **abscess**. Sometimes, however, the abscess is not visible yet, and we have to use your description, or other secondary diagnostic signs, to decide if a root canal is needed.

A healthy tooth consists of a crown, a root, a pulp chamber and pulp canal.

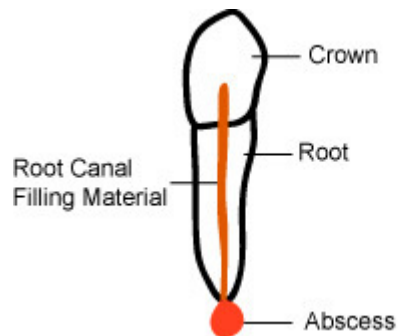
When everything is healthy, there is no abscess at the root tip and the blood flow is normal.

Sometimes the nerve dies and you have a toothache.

When the nerve dies, the result is an **abscess** at the root tip.

The reason the tooth hurts is because this abscess is pressing against nerves outside the tooth, in the surrounding bone, creating pressure and pain.

When this happens, we do a root canal.



The process of doing the root canal involves removing the diseased nerve tissue from the pulp chamber and canal, and replacing it with *gutta percha* - an inert rubber material that is cemented in place.

After the root canal is finished, the abscess goes away and the tooth is comfortable again.