

Restoration of Teeth



1. What does endodontics mean?

- Endodontics refers to within the tooth. Endo means within, dontic refers to the tooth.

2. What is an endodontist?

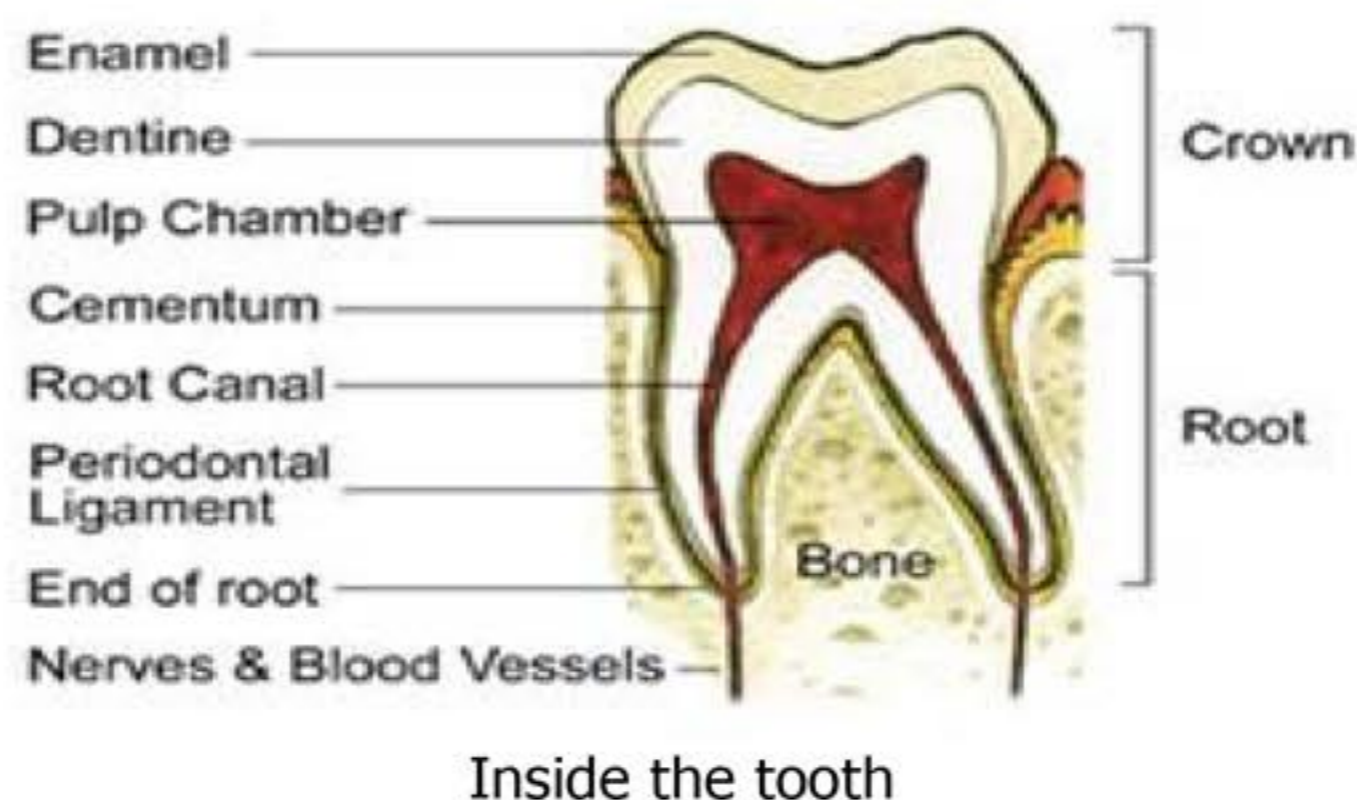
- An endodontist is a dentist who is a specialist in the treatment of endodontic or root canal problems.

3. What is a root canal?

- A root canal is a narrow passage in a root through which the nerves and blood vessels enter the tooth.
- They travel from the end of the root through the root canal on their way to the **pulp chamber** at the centre of the tooth.

4. What is a pulp chamber?

- The pulp chamber is the space in the crown of a tooth, which houses the nerves and blood vessels (the pulp). They have entered the tooth through the root canals. The **pulp chamber** is like a nerve and blood vessel terminus, where their inward journey ends and the return journey back to the end of the root begins.
- The nerves send pain signals to the brain in response to the presence of decay or injury.
- The blood vessels supply the nutritional needs of the tooth.



5. What is a root canal treatment?

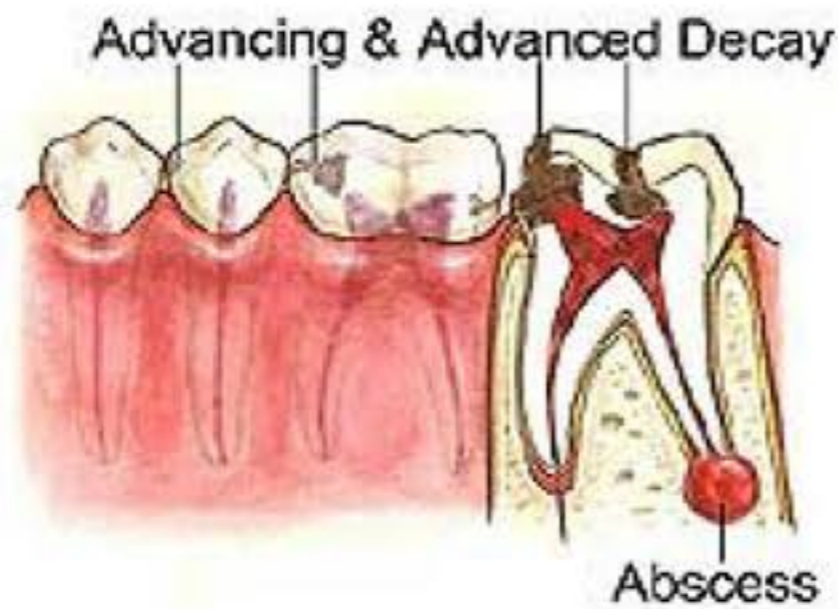
- This is a treatment to remove infected nerves and blood vessels from the **pulp chamber** and **root canals**.
- It is professionally called an endodontic treatment.

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6. How does a root canal become infected?

- A root canal becomes infected when decay spreads into it, or when the root of the tooth is fractured or injured as a result of an accident.



How decay spreads
Abscess on root

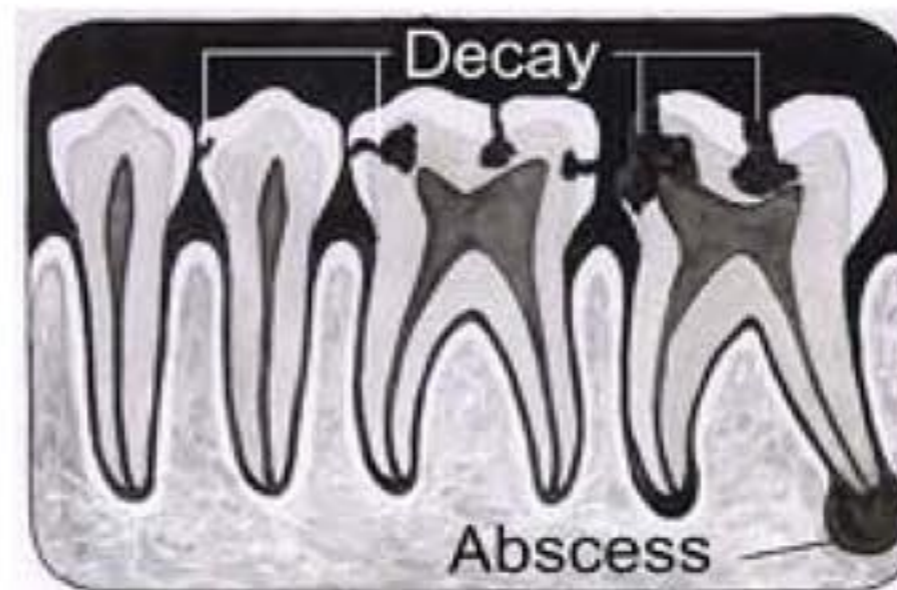


Illustration of
x-ray showing decay

7. How can I know if I have a root canal problem?

- Teeth that have root canal problems are generally painful.
- **Decomposing** nerves and blood vessels create gases that expand and are locked into the pulp chamber and root canals. They cause pressure which results in pain.
- The pain can be in response to temperature changes, especially hot drinks, or can be spontaneous, very severe, and even throbbing in nature.
- The tooth may be tender on chewing.

8. How are root canal problems treated?

- The first step is to open the pulp chamber to allow access to the root canals.
- **Pus** accumulates in the pulp chamber and in the root canals when an **infection** is severe.
- It may be necessary to leave the tooth open so that the pus can drain out.
- When the **symptoms** are relieved, the root canal treatment can be continued.
- The root canal and pulp chamber are reshaped and cleaned out.
- The now empty canal and pulp chamber are filled and sealed with special materials.



Before treatment



After root filled

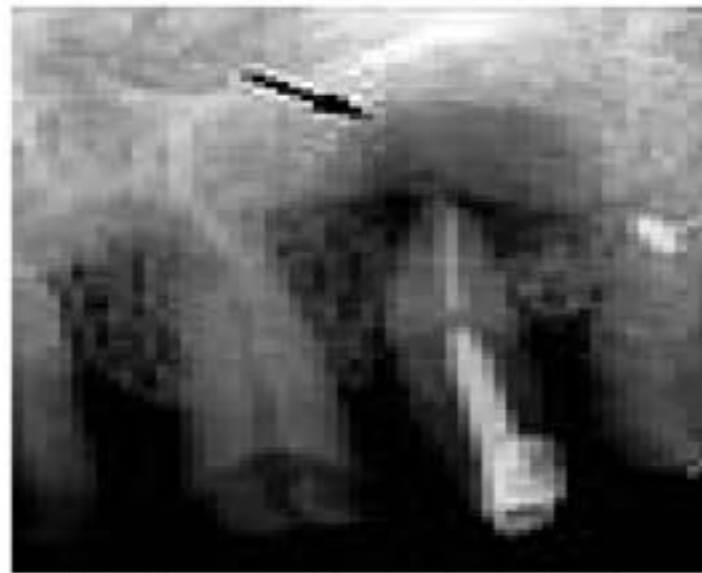
9. What is an apicectomy?

- Apicectomy means the "removal of the apex of the root."

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- During **periapical** surgery, a small piece of the root tip is removed. The end of the root canal is then sealed with a special material.
- An apicectomy may be necessary after a root canal treatment has not been successful. After an unsuccessful root canal treatment, when some **infection** has remained at the end of a root and in the surrounding area. This can happen.
- Access to the area is through the gum and bone at the side of the root.
- The purpose of the apicectomy is to make sure that there is no remaining infection in the area.



Before: showing dark infected area on root

10. Is root canal treatment painful?

- The treatment is generally not painful as a **local anaesthetic** is used.
- If the patient is in pain after the anaesthetic wears off, pain relievers can be used.

11. Are antibiotics necessary to treat root canal infections?

- Sometimes the **infection** is so severe that it can spread through the end of the roots and into the bone that surrounds the tooth.
- This is the way an **abscess** forms at the end of a root.
- The endodontist or dentist may decide to use antibiotics to clear the infection.
- The root canal treatment can then be completed.

12. How successful is root canal treatment?

- Root canal treatment is very successful. It can save a severely infected tooth from being extracted.
- The length of time taken to complete the treatment will be determined by the number, shape and other characteristics of the roots.
A badly infected root canal may need several return visits to the dentist before the root is ready to be filled.
- Your **general dentist** may decide to refer you to an **endodontist**, depending on the complexity of the problem.

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Large abscess over root



Good result
after treatment

