

*Ask your  
Dentist!*

*“What is  
Root Canal  
Therapy?”*



**Root Canal Therapy, also referred to as an Endodontic treatment, is one method of saving a damaged tooth by treating the nerve (sometimes called the pulp) in the tooth's centre. A Root Canal is generally successful at saving a tooth.**

Either your dentist or a dental specialist called an Endodontist will perform the Root Canal Therapy. The procedure usually starts with isolating the damaged tooth and numbing it. An opening is made through the chewing surface of the tooth and the damaged pulp is carefully removed from its canal inside the tooth. The canal is cleaned, shaped and enlarged.

Each Root Canal procedure is different, and sometimes your dentist or Endodontist will decide to place a filling material in the root canal right away, and a temporary filling or restoration in the tooth's chewing surface. If you are prescribed any medications or antibiotics, it is important that you take them.

At the next dental appointment, your dentist or Endodontist will make certain any infection is completely gone, and the root canal and tooth surface will be permanently filled and sealed. If the tooth had a large filling, you may require a dental cap or crown, and additional appointments may be necessary.

When the procedure is finished, you and your dentist will have succeeded in saving one of your most valuable assets - a natural tooth.

### *Why do I need Root Canal Therapy?*

Your teeth are living things, just like your fingers or toes or other body parts that have living cells and nerves and require oxygen. Sometimes the nerve in the tooth's centre becomes damaged due to an injury to the tooth or from deep decay. An abscess forms as the nerve becomes infected with bacteria. Eventually the nerve will die and cause serious damage to the surrounding bone and gums. Root Canal Therapy will usually be successful at saving the tooth.

### *Why should I save a damaged tooth?*

Our teeth are meant for life, and saving a natural tooth is usually the best option over time. Patients who suffer tooth loss often find an unpleasant change in the way they speak, chew, smile and interact with others. A missing tooth puts unnatural strain on adjacent teeth and can lead to further tooth loss. While many patients are well-served by false teeth (dental implants, bridges and dentures to name a few), the best option for your continued good health is to save your natural teeth.

### *What if I have further questions?*

Your dentist is there to answer any questions you might have - before or after you undergo Root Canal Therapy. Don't hesitate to bring your concerns to him or her.



**Information courtesy of your  
dentist and the Nova Scotia  
Dental Association  
[www.healthyteeth.org](http://www.healthyteeth.org)**