

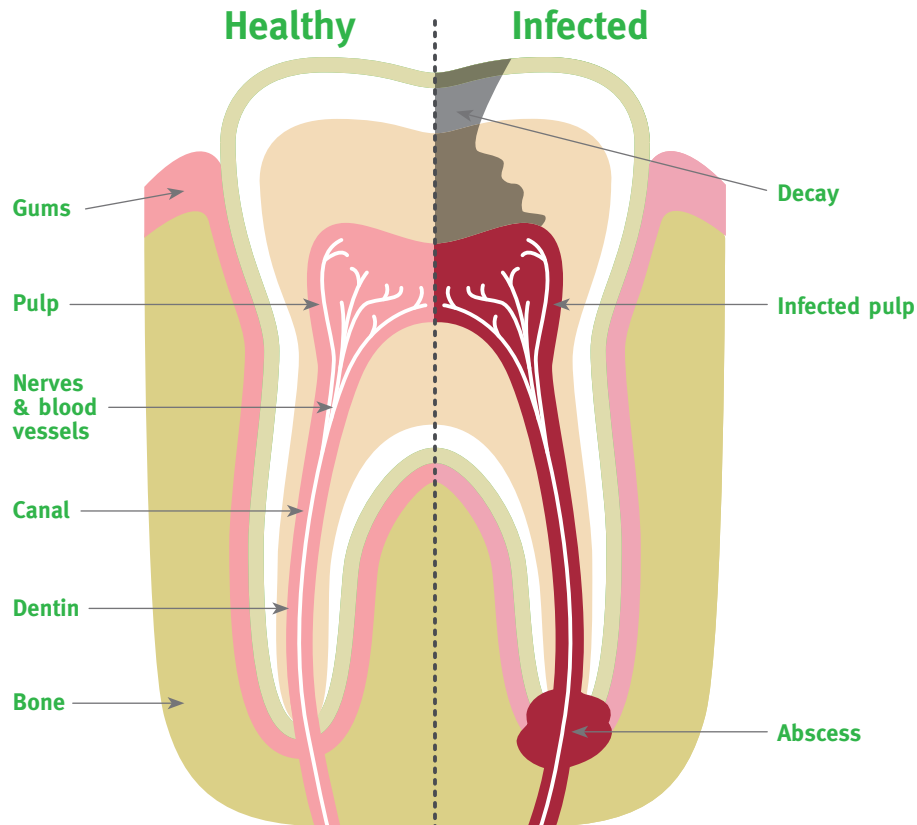


Root Canal

What it is:

You may cringe when you hear the phrase “root canal,” but today’s technology and anesthetics make a root canal comparable to getting a cavity filled. In fact, most patients believe any mouth pain they were experiencing before the treatment is far more uncomfortable than the procedure to relieve it.

Each tooth in your mouth is supplied by a nerve and blood vessels. The space inside the roots of your teeth where the nerve sits is called the canal. A root canal treatment removes nerve tissue or pulp from the canal inside each tooth root. Front teeth usually have one canal; molar teeth may have three or four.



Why you would get one:

A root canal is needed if tooth decay has spread to the nerve or an accident has caused trauma to the tooth, **infecting or killing the nerve**. Your tooth still functions without the nerve, but you won’t experience hot and cold sensations in that tooth when you eat or drink.

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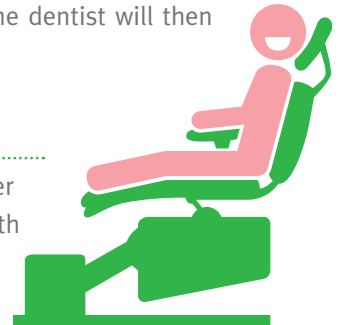
How it works:

Step 1

After you're seated in the dental chair, your general dentist or one who specializes in root canals (endodontist) will numb the gum near the tooth with a gel-like topical anesthesia. The dentist will then numb the tooth itself with an injection of local anesthesia.

Step 2

Once your mouth is numb, your dentist will place a thin latex sheet (dental dam) over your mouth. A hole is made in the dam so your dentist can work on the affected tooth by isolating it from the rest of the mouth. This keeps the workspace dry and sterile.



Step 3

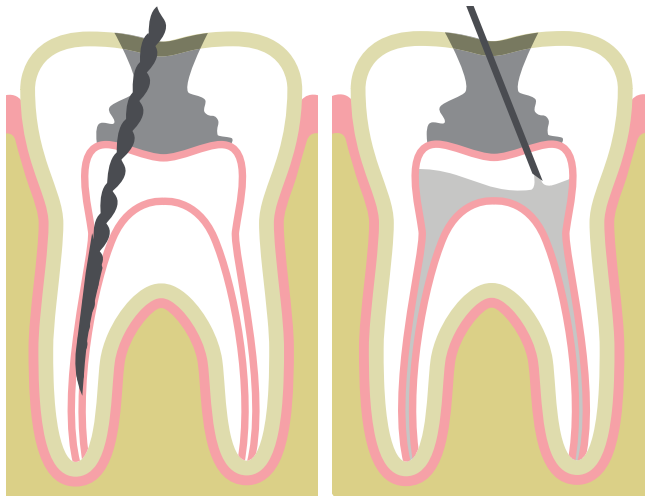
Next, the inflamed tissue will be removed from the inside of the affected tooth with tools designed to clean out the tooth canals.

Step 4

After cleaning and shaping the inside of the root canal, your dentist will fill and seal it to prevent further infection.

Step 5

Finally, you may need a crown or other restoration over your tooth to help protect it and restore it to proper function. A temporary filling or crown will be placed on your tooth immediately following the root canal. The treated tooth may feel a little sensitive for a few days, but that can typically be relieved with over-the-counter medication.



Removing tissue

Filling the canals

Step 6

You'll return within the next couple of weeks to have the permanent filling or crown placed. Before placing the permanent restoration, your dentist will check to make sure the tooth has healed and no infection is present.

Worth noting:

If your root canal was done by an endodontist, you'll likely visit your general dentist to complete the restorative work.



If you have any questions about what your dental plan covers, talk with your dentist or visit DeltaDentalMA.com and sign in to view your benefits information.