Root Canal Treatment

What is root canal treatment?

- It is the removal and cleaning of infected or inflamed pulp from inside your tooth
- Pulp is the soft tissue inside your tooth made of nerves and blood vessels
- Root canals are where your pulp is found

Why do I need root canal treatment?

Your pulp has become infected or inflamed and needs to be removed:

- When your tooth is traumatised (injured)
- If there is a deep filling or large cavity in your tooth
- If your tooth breaks or wears down
- With some types of periodontal (gum) disease
- When you have pain

What happens during root canal treatment?

- Your tooth will be numbed with an injection
- The dental practitioner will remove any decay and any fillings from your tooth
- The dental practitioner will remove the pulp from inside your tooth
- The inside of your tooth is cleaned and your root canals are disinfected and shaped
Your root canals are filled and the hole in your tooth is fixed with a strong filling

X-rays are taken at different times during your root canal treatment to check that the treatment is going as expected

A root canal treatment can take several visits to finish and you will go home between visits with a temporary filling

**What are the complications of root canal treatment?**

- In most cases root canal treatment is successful and your tooth will no longer cause pain
- Some teeth have very complicated root canals and may need treatment by a specialist
- Some people get mild soreness or pain following root canal treatment because of inflammation of the gums and jaws around the tooth; this usually gets better after a day or two
- Some teeth become infected after root canal treatment and may need further treatment.
- Teeth may sometimes get darker in colour after root canal treatment but treatments are available that may lighten the colour of the tooth again
- Root canal treatment may make your tooth weaker making it more likely to snap or break; broken, root canal treated teeth may need to be extracted
- The dental practitioner uses small files to clean inside your tooth; these may break and your tooth may need further treatment
- If your tooth is an unusual shape, root canal treatment may lead to holes in the side of your tooth root which will then need further treatment

**What is my alternative to root canal treatment?**

The only alternative way of removing the inflamed and infected pulp is to remove (extract) your whole tooth which may need to be replaced with an artificial tooth (a denture or bridge).

For further information on root canal treatment ask your dental practitioner.