

# Explanation of Endodontic Therapy (Root Canal) and Consent for Treatment



THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED SO THAT YOU MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND THE TREATMENT RECOMMENDED FOR YOU. WE WANT YOU TO FEEL CONFIDENT AND WELL-INFORMED ABOUT THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE FOR YOUR TREATMENT.

## What is a root canal and what are my options?

Endodontic, or “root canal” therapy, is the cleaning out and sealing of the soft-tissue (“pulp” or “nerve”) space inside of a tooth and its root(s). A root canal is necessary when the pulp inside the tooth is severely inflamed, infected, or has died off. The alternatives to root canal therapy are either removal of the tooth or postponing treatment. Postponing treatment increases the risk of complications such as infection, pain, and tooth fracture, among others.

## How well does it work and what are the risks?

Root canal therapy is successful over 90% of the time. But individual variations such as your level of personal oral hygiene, the number and shape of the canal(s), extent of decay and infection, previous dental work, quality of bone/gum support, and root fractures all influence the success of treatment. Root fractures are often undetectable during treatment, and even the root canal procedure itself may aggravate or initiate a crack. Regardless of whether a fracture occurs before, during, or after root canal therapy, a tooth with a cracked root must be extracted.

Teeth with severely curved and/or calcified (narrowed) canals are more difficult to treat. These teeth are at increased risk of an instrument separating within the canal, perforating out the side of a root, or having inaccessible areas of the canal. Often they can still be sealed, but they may require additional procedures or even extraction of the tooth.

Rarely, injury to adjacent nerves and blood vessels can occur. It may result in significant bleeding or bruising (for injured blood vessels), while injury to nearby nerves can cause prolonged or permanent numbness, itching, or burning of the lip, tongue, teeth, and/or chin.

## What can I expect during and after treatment?

During treatment the tooth is numbed completely, thus you should not experience any pain. If at any point the procedure hurts, alert your doctor immediately. Afterwards, it is normal for some soreness/pain to persist for a few days, but sometimes for up to a week or more. Over-the-counter pain medications (Motrin, Tylenol, Aspirin, etc.) are generally all that is required, although your doctor may prescribe something stronger. In some cases antibiotics may be prescribed as well. If pain or swelling does not improve or worsens at any time, contact us right away.

## How do I maintain the health of my root canal treated tooth?

Because a root canal treated tooth is more susceptible to fracture than a normal tooth, a “Crown” is usually required within a few weeks after root canal therapy, if not sooner. If you do not follow-up with a crown when recommended, you risk the tooth breaking down or becoming re-infected. A root canal treated tooth (even with a crown) can still get a cavity. Proper daily brushing and flossing habits, along with regular dental cleanings, are the best way to maintain your tooth.

## Expenses.

The root canal fee is for the root canal only. There are separate fees for subsequent treatment such as the build-up, post, and crown. Additionally, any expenses that arise from complications may also be your responsibility.

## Authorization for treatment and acknowledgment of options.

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and understand the information above, am aware of my treatment needs and options, understand the risks, know that success cannot be guaranteed, and know that I am encouraged to discuss any concerns with my doctor at any time.

I \_\_\_\_\_, authorize Dr. Rodriguez to proceed with root canal therapy on tooth/teeth number(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_