Root Canal Therapy in Melbourne | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/general-dentistry/root-canal-therapy/

Details:

Root canal therapy is a dental treatment used to treat infection or inflammation inside a tooth. We remove the affected pulp, which is the living part of the tooth containing nerves and blood vessels, clean and seal the canals, and then protect the tooth with a filling or crown. The aim is to save a tooth that would otherwise need to be extracted and to stop bacteria spreading. At Core Dental our dentists assess whether root canal therapy suits your tooth. Results vary for each person.

What is root canal therapy?

Root canal therapy, often shortened to RCT, treats the inside of a tooth when the pulp has become infected or inflamed. The pulp is the soft tissue in the centre of the tooth. Left untreated, infection can spread and cause pain, swelling and loss of the tooth. Removing the infected pulp and sealing the canals helps to stop the spread of bacteria, so the tooth may be kept in your mouth.

What are the options for an infected tooth?

Infection or inflammation within a tooth can generally be treated in one of two ways: root canal therapy, or extraction of the tooth. Where a tooth can realistically be saved for the long term, we usually discuss root canal therapy first. Where it cannot, extraction may be recommended. If extraction is planned, it is worth thinking about whether the gap would need to be filled later with a bridge, a denture or an implant. You can read our comparison of root canal treatment or implants and our guide to dental implants and root canal treatment .

What are the steps in a root canal procedure?

Root canal therapy has three main stages, and the whole treatment usually takes between one and three sessions.

Access. Before treatment begins, we give a local anaesthetic to numb the tooth. A rubber dam is placed to isolate the tooth from saliva and bacteria in the mouth. We then make a small opening in the top of the tooth to reach the canals. You can read about the dental dam on our website.

Remove. The affected pulp is removed, and the canals are thoroughly cleaned and irrigated with an antibacterial preparation.

Fill. The canals are filled with a synthetic material that provides a seal.

To help the tooth last, we recommend protecting a root-treated tooth with a filling or a crown. Your dentist will explain which suits your tooth. See our pages on fillings and restorations and dental crowns .

Is anaesthetic used during root canal therapy?

Yes. We administer local anaesthetic before treatment begins so the tooth is numb, and you can tell us if you feel any discomfort at any stage. Many people are concerned about pain, and we take the time to explain each step. If you feel anxious, tell us when you book so we can plan your visit. Our sleep dentistry page explains sedation options available at selected practices.

Is root canal treatment suitable for you?

If you have pain or discomfort from a tooth, a check-up with one of our dentists will identify the cause and whether root canal therapy is appropriate. It is most suitable when the tooth can realistically be saved for the long term. Where the tooth is not severely damaged, cracked or decayed, and the surrounding gum is relatively healthy, root canal therapy is generally recommended.

Root canal therapy is normally unsuitable where the tooth is beyond saving, where an infection is severe, or where the tooth is badly damaged or likely to be lost later because of gum disease. Your dentist will explain the reasons for their recommendation, and you can ask about alternatives.

What are the risks and limits of root canal therapy?

Like any dental treatment, root canal therapy has limits. A treated tooth can still fracture, and a tooth may need retreatment, a crown or later extraction if infection returns or the tooth is badly weakened. Some tenderness for a few days after treatment is common. Your dentist will explain the likely risks and aftercare before you decide. Contact us if pain, swelling or fever develops after treatment.

How do you look after a root-treated tooth?

Protect the tooth with the filling or crown your dentist recommends, brush twice a day, clean between your teeth daily and attend regular check-ups so any problem is found early. Your dentist will advise what to eat or drink after treatment. You can read more about what you can eat or drink after root canal treatment .

How much does root canal therapy cost, and how can you pay?

Cost depends on the tooth, the number of canals, the number of sessions and whether you need a crown afterwards. Extraction can cost less than root canal therapy, although it leaves a gap that may need replacing, so we explain both options. We give you a written treatment plan and quote before treatment starts. We offer interest-free Payright plans with fortnightly instalments over 3 to 30 months for amounts up to $20,000, subject to eligibility and approval. HICAPS claiming is available on-site, and any rebate depends on your own health fund cover. Payment terms were published as at September 2026, so please confirm the current terms and your rebate before booking. See our dental payment plans page.

Where can you have root canal therapy at Core Dental?

Root canal therapy is part of the general dentistry service at our practices, including Southbank , Caroline Springs , Berwick and Glenferrie . Call 13 13 16 and we will help you find a practice and a time. If you are in pain, tell us when you call. We reserve emergency appointments each day.

Who provides root canal therapy at Core Dental?

Our general dentists assess your tooth and provide root canal treatment where it is appropriate. Where a tooth is complex, we can involve a registered specialist endodontist. Learn more on our endodontist page and on our page about dentists and registered specialists . You can check a practitioner on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au.

What are the benefits of root canal therapy?

There are two, and they operate on different timescales.

The most immediate benefit is pain relief, which can be significant. Where infection or inflammation has reached the pulp, the sensitive nerves and blood vessels at the centre of the tooth, the pain can be severe, and if left untreated the infection can allow an abscess to form at the root tip or allow bacteria to enter the jaw bone. Removing the affected pulp addresses the cause rather than masking it.

The long-term benefit is that it preserves your natural tooth. That contrasts with extraction, which leaves a space that in turn needs to be filled with a dental bridge or with an implant and crown, both of which are more involved and more expensive treatments. In most cases where a tooth is compromised, it is preferable to save the tooth with root canal therapy if that is at all possible.

For patients on a tight budget, extraction is the more affordable option in the short term, and it is a legitimate choice. The comparison worth making is between extraction plus eventual replacement, and root canal therapy plus a crown, rather than between extraction and root canal therapy alone.

Does root canal therapy hurt?

The treatment itself is carried out only once the tooth has been completely numbed, so the procedure is not painful. In practice it eases the pain caused by an infected tooth rather than adding to it.

That said, for many people the thought of undergoing any dental treatment, however simple or complex, produces feelings of anxiety, and that is worth raising with us before the appointment rather than during it. We can explain each step in advance, and discuss what options are available to help you stay comfortable.

Some tenderness afterwards is normal. It is a symptom of your body's healing process and usually lasts only a few days following treatment. If pain is severe, worsening, or persists beyond that, contact us rather than waiting.

What should you eat and avoid while the temporary filling is in place?

The temporary filling is not as strong as the final restoration, so the few days or weeks before the permanent restoration is fitted need some care.

We recommend that you avoid hot, hard, crunchy or sticky foods and drinks, and that you try to avoid chewing on the treated side of your mouth while the temporary filling is in place. Once the permanent protection is in place, you can eat and drink as normal.

Why does a root-treated tooth need a crown afterwards?

Because the treatment addresses the infection but does not restore the strength of what remains.

For a tooth to require root canal therapy, it has usually already suffered decay, wear or trauma, any of which compromises the structural integrity of the tooth. Root canal therapy itself also inevitably weakens the remaining natural tooth to some extent. Taken together, that is why there are instances in which root canal treatment does not achieve a lasting favourable result.

This problem can be significantly reduced by the fitting of a crown. To maximise longevity it is recommended that a root-treated tooth be protected with either a restoration, meaning a filling, or a crown, and that this be done shortly after the completion of root canal treatment. The follow-up restoration aims to protect the already compromised tooth and to prevent cracking or splitting of the remaining tooth structure.

What are the procedural risks during treatment?

Procedural risks are those that arise during the treatment process itself, and the main one is specific.

The principal procedural risk is for the root canal instrument, commonly known as a file, to fracture inside the root canal. This risk is greatest in patients whose canals are severely curved, calcified or hard to access. Where a file does fracture in such a case, management is best handled by an endodontist, a registered specialist in root canal treatment.

This is one of the reasons the complexity of your particular canals is assessed before treatment rather than discovered during it.

What risks can arise after treatment?

Non-procedural risks involve problems that can arise immediately or shortly after treatment. They include:

residual infection, where the complexity of the root canal system makes it impossible to remove all of the nerve tissue effectively

a crack or split in the root, which often requires removal of the tooth

post-treatment sensitivity or pain, either from the trauma of treatment or from biting when the tooth super-erupts as a result of inflammation

In the majority of cases the last of these can be avoided by the placement of a crown. Your dentist will explain which of these risks are more likely in your case, and what the plan is if one occurs.

How do you look after your teeth after root canal therapy?

Good oral hygiene matters as much after treatment as before it, and arguably more, because the tooth has less margin left.

You can clean your teeth as normal, though we recommend being gentle when brushing and flossing the treated area at first. Alongside your home routine, you also need to follow up with regular check-ups with your general dentist and cleans with your hygienist, both to monitor the treated tooth and its restoration and to maintain your oral health generally.

When is a tooth referred to an endodontist?

In more complex cases, and the referral is a deliberate decision rather than a default.

Core Dental's general dentists perform root canal therapy routinely. We recommend an endodontist in more complex cases in order to reduce the risk of complications, typically where the canals are severely curved, calcified or difficult to access, where previous treatment has not resolved the problem, or where the anatomy is unusual.

Endodontists are registered specialists, and you can confirm any practitioner's registration on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au. You can read more about our endodontics services and our specialist care generally.

Frequently asked questions

How many sessions does root canal treatment take?

Root canal therapy usually takes one to three sessions, depending on the tooth and how complex the canals are. Your dentist will tell you what to expect at your first visit.

Will root canal treatment hurt?

We use local anaesthetic to numb the tooth before treatment, and you can tell us if you feel discomfort. Some tenderness for a few days afterwards is common. Contact us if pain or swelling gets worse.

Why does a root-treated tooth need a crown or filling?

A root-treated tooth can be weakened. Protecting it with a filling or crown helps it to last. Your dentist will recommend which suits your tooth and your bite.

Is extraction an alternative to a root canal?

Yes. Extraction is the other option for an infected tooth. It can cost less at first, but it leaves a gap that may need to be replaced. We explain both options and the costs before you decide.

What is a rubber dam used for?

A rubber dam is a thin sheet placed around the tooth to isolate it from saliva and bacteria while we work. It keeps the area clean and dry and helps to protect your mouth during treatment.

Is extraction cheaper than root canal therapy?

In the short term, yes, and for patients on a tight budget it is the more affordable option. The fuller comparison is between extraction plus the bridge or implant and crown that usually follows it, and root canal therapy plus a protective crown, because an extracted tooth leaves a space that generally needs filling.

How long does tenderness last after a root canal?

Usually a few days. Some tenderness is a normal part of your body's healing process. If the pain is severe, getting worse, or lasting longer than that, contact us rather than waiting for your next appointment.

What can I eat while the temporary filling is in?

Avoid hot, hard, crunchy and sticky foods and drinks, and try not to chew on the treated side. A temporary filling is not as strong as the final restoration. Once the permanent crown or filling is in place, you can eat and drink as normal.

Can a root canal file break inside the tooth?

It is the main procedural risk, and it is most likely where the canals are severely curved, calcified or hard to access. In those cases management is best handled by an endodontist, which is one of the reasons canal complexity is assessed before treatment begins.

Related services and further reading

General dentistry

Fillings and restorations

Dental crowns

General tooth extraction

Endodontist

What to expect from a root canal

Do I need root canal treatment?

Emergency dentistry

Dental payment plans

Dental check-up

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans.

HICAPS on-site claiming at our practices.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through your practice page, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday mornings, Sunday closed
Clinics	Find your nearest practice

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What is root canal therapy at Core Dental?

Root canal therapy treats infection or inflammation inside a tooth by removing the affected pulp, cleaning and sealing the canals. At Core Dental our dentists assess your tooth first and explain whether the treatment suits you.

What are the stages of a Core Dental root canal?

There are three stages: access to the canals through a small opening, removal of the affected pulp with cleaning and irrigation, and filling the canals with a sealing material. Core Dental usually completes this in one to three sessions.

Does Core Dental use anaesthetic for root canal treatment?

Yes. Our dentists give a local anaesthetic to numb the tooth before treatment begins, and place a rubber dam to isolate the tooth from saliva and bacteria. Tell the team if you feel any discomfort.

When is a root canal not recommended by Core Dental?

Root canal therapy is normally unsuitable where the tooth is beyond saving, the infection is severe, or the tooth is badly damaged or likely to be lost because of gum disease. Our dentists then discuss extraction and replacement.

Does a root-treated tooth need a crown at Core Dental?

We recommend protecting a root-treated tooth with a filling or a crown to help it last. Your Core Dental dentist advises which suits your tooth, your bite and your budget.

Which Core Dental practices offer root canal therapy?

Root canal therapy is part of general dentistry at practices including Southbank, Caroline Springs, Berwick and Glenferrie. Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 to find a practice and a time that suits you.

How can I pay for root canal treatment at Core Dental?

We quote before treatment starts, offer HICAPS claiming on-site and provide interest-free Payright plans for amounts up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months, subject to approval. Terms were published as at September 2026.

How do I book a root canal appointment at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online through your preferred practice page. If you have tooth pain, tell us when you call, because Core Dental reserves emergency appointments each day where possible.