Endodontist and Root Canal Care in Melbourne | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/specialist-care/endodontics/

Details:

Endodontics is the area of dentistry that deals with the pulp inside a tooth, which contains the blood supply and nerves, and with the tissues around the roots. When the pulp becomes diseased or injured, root canal treatment may allow the tooth to be saved. At Core Dental our dentists provide root canal care across our practices, and we can involve a registered specialist endodontist for complex cases. Whether treatment suits you depends on an examination and imaging, and results vary for each person.

What is endodontics?

Endodontics focuses on the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases and injuries that affect the tooth pulp and the tissues surrounding the roots of a tooth. The pulp sits in the centre of the tooth, inside the crown and the root canals. When it is infected, inflamed or injured, you may notice pain, sensitivity to hot or cold, swelling or a darkened tooth, although sometimes there are no symptoms at all.

Why might you need root canal treatment?

When the pulp is diseased or injured, root canal treatment allows the tooth to be kept in place, which maintains both its function and its appearance. Treatment removes the affected pulp, cleans and shapes the canals, and seals them. Your dentist then usually recommends a restoration, such as a filling or a crown , to protect the tooth. You can read more in our guides on when root canal treatment is needed and what to expect from a root canal .

What does endodontic specialist care cover?

Endodontic care includes:

root canal therapy, the main procedure used to save a tooth with a compromised pulp

treatment of cracked teeth

treatment of dental trauma, for injured teeth

endodontic treatment of teeth with diseased or damaged pulp

Some teeth have complex root shapes, previous root fillings or hard-to-reach canals, and these cases may benefit from referral to a specialist.

What qualifications does an endodontist have?

An endodontist is a registered dental specialist with advanced training beyond general dentistry. In Australia, registering as a specialist endodontist requires a qualification in the specialty, all the requirements for general registration as a dentist, and — in the Dental Board of Australia’s words — "a

minimum of two years general dental practice". The Board sets those requirements rather than a course length, so we do not publish a figure for the total years involved. You can check that any practitioner is registered, and whether they hold specialist registration, on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au. Our guide on why seeing a registered specialist matters explains more.

How do you access endodontic care at Core Dental?

Most people reach specialist endodontic care through their general dentist, who examines the tooth, takes imaging and explains whether a general dentist or a specialist is the right person to treat it. Our clinic page for Carrum Downs lists endodontist services, and our other practices provide root canal therapy through our dentists. You do not need a referral to book with us, and you can call 13 13 16 to ask about your situation. Specialist availability varies by practice, so confirm it when you book.

What are the risks and limits of root canal treatment?

Root canal treatment aims to save a tooth, but it cannot guarantee that the tooth will last. Risks include ongoing or returning infection, a crack in the tooth, a canal that cannot be fully cleaned, and discomfort for a few days afterwards. A tooth that has had root canal treatment can be more brittle and often needs a crown. Extraction and an implant may be the alternative, and our guide on root canal treatment or implants explains how to think about the choice. Your dentist explains the risks, alternatives and costs before you decide.

How much does endodontic care cost, and how can you pay?

Fees depend on the tooth, how complex the canals are, the clinician and any restoration afterwards. We provide a written quote before treatment starts. We offer interest-free payment plans through Payright at 0% interest with fortnightly instalments over 3 to 30 months for plans 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. Terms were published as at September 2026, so please confirm them when you book.

What should you do about severe tooth pain or swelling?

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, difficulty breathing or swallowing, a serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms. For severe tooth pain or swelling without these signs, contact us promptly on 13 13 16. We reserve emergency appointments at our practices where possible. See our emergency dentistry page.

What is the pulp, and what happens when it becomes infected?

The pulp is the living part of the tooth, consisting of sensitive nerves and blood vessels at its centre.

In cases of infection or inflammation, the pulp can become very painful. Left untreated, it can allow an abscess to form at the root tip, or even allow bacteria to enter the jaw bone. This condition is frequently treated with root canal therapy.

That progression is why pulpal pain is not something to wait out. The pain itself can subside when the nerve dies, which people sometimes read as improvement, while the infection continues to spread into the bone around the root.

When should an endodontist handle the case rather than a general dentist?

General dentists carry out root canal treatment routinely and competently. In complex cases we recommend specialist care, because complexity is where the risk of an incomplete result concentrates.

Complexity usually means one of the following: canals that are severely curved, calcified or difficult to access; unusual root anatomy; a tooth that has had previous root canal treatment which has not resolved; or a suspected crack. In those situations a specialist's magnification, instruments and case volume make a material difference.

Endodontics is a recognised specialist division of the Dental Board of Australia, and you can confirm whether a practitioner holds specialist registration in endodontics on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au.

Who is the endodontist at Core Dental?

Core Dental's endodontic care has been provided by Dr Tilley, whose background is set out below as published on coredental.com.au.

Qualifications. Dr Tilley trained in Melbourne, gaining his Bachelor of Dental Science from the University of Melbourne, followed by his Licentiate of Dental Surgery (Victoria) in 1972. He is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons in Endodontics and Restorative Dentistry.

Clinical career. He practised as a general dentist until 1979, after which he began practising as a specialist endodontist in Tasmania and Victoria. He has more than 35 years of clinical experience in the field, most recently in the overall management of complex cases.

Teaching. As an honorary Senior Fellow in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Melbourne, Dr Tilley has been involved in supervising and mentoring endodontic specialists in training for well over 20 years. Teaching at that level requires remaining current with new developments in the field, alongside passing on the insights of decades of clinical practice.

Wider professional roles. He has lectured in all states of Australia and overseas, and has chaired sessions and presented at international conferences in the United States and throughout Asia. He consults on an international committee for the development of endodontic instruments and materials, which brings him into contact with endodontic developers worldwide.

Professional memberships. A past president of the Australian Dental Association (Victorian branch), Dr Tilley is a member of the American Association of Endodontists, the Australian Society of Endodontology, and the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Endodontists.

Practitioner availability changes, so please confirm who will be treating you when you book, and check their current registration at ahpra.gov.au.

What training does Core Dental provide to other dentists?

Endodontic technique has changed considerably, and part of our endodontist's work has been bringing other clinicians along with it.

Within Australia, Dr Tilley has delivered a range of introductory and advanced hands-on workshops. These are designed either to up-skill dentists from hand instrumentation techniques to the incorporation of rotary endodontics, or to present more advanced rotary endodontic concepts to clinicians already familiar with the basic practice.

For patients, the relevance is indirect but real: the general dentists who carry out routine root canal treatment within the group have access to a specialist who teaches the technique, and a referral pathway when a case turns out to be more complex than it first appeared.

Frequently asked questions

What does an endodontist do?

An endodontist is a registered dental specialist who diagnoses and treats problems of the tooth pulp and the tissues around the roots. The main treatment is root canal therapy, which is used to save a tooth with a damaged or infected pulp.

Do I need a referral to see an endodontist?

People usually reach an endodontist through their general dentist, who examines the tooth and decides whether specialist care is needed. You can call 13 13 16 to ask about your situation, and specialist availability varies by practice.

Is root canal treatment painful?

Treatment is carried out with local anaesthetic, so you should not feel pain during it. Some tenderness for a few days afterwards is common. Tell your dentist if pain is severe or continues, and see our guide on what to eat and drink after root canal treatment .

How long does a specialist endodontist train for?

In Australia, a specialist endodontist completes a dental degree and then a postgraduate qualification in endodontics, and must also have completed a minimum of two years general dental practice before specialist registration. The Dental Board of Australia publishes those requirements rather than a course length. Registration can be checked on the national public register of health practitioners.

Can a cracked tooth be saved?

Sometimes. Endodontic care includes treatment of cracked teeth, but it depends on how deep the crack goes and the health of the tooth. Your dentist examines the tooth and explains whether it can be saved and what the options are.

Why does the pain sometimes stop before treatment?

Because the nerve inside the tooth can die, which ends the pain while the infection continues spreading into the bone around the root. A tooth that stopped hurting has not necessarily resolved.

Which cases should go to an endodontist?

Typically those with severely curved, calcified or hard-to-access canals, unusual root anatomy, a previous root canal that has not resolved, or a suspected crack. General dentists treat routine cases, and complexity is where specialist magnification and instruments matter most.

Does Core Dental's endodontist teach as well as treat?

Yes. Dr Tilley has been an honorary Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne, supervising endodontic specialists in training for over 20 years, and has run hands-on workshops for practising

dentists on rotary endodontic technique.

How can I check an endodontist's registration?

On the AHPRA public register at ahpra.gov.au, which shows whether a practitioner holds specialist registration in endodontics. Endodontics is one of the recognised specialist divisions of the Dental Board of Australia.

Related services and further reading

Specialist care

Root canal therapy

Oral and maxillofacial surgery

Orthodontist

Paediatric dentistry

Periodontics

Prosthodontics

Emergency dentistry

Dentists and registered specialists

Dental payment plans

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.

Interest-free payment plans, HICAPS on-site claiming, bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), 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 endodontics at Core Dental?

Endodontics is the area of dentistry that diagnoses and treats problems of the tooth pulp and the tissues around the roots. At Core Dental our dentists provide root canal therapy, and we can involve a registered specialist endodontist for complex cases.

What treatments does endodontic care cover at Core Dental?

Endodontic care at Core Dental covers root canal therapy to save a tooth with a compromised pulp, treatment of cracked teeth, treatment of dental trauma and endodontic treatment for teeth with diseased or damaged pulp, following an examination and imaging.

How is a specialist endodontist qualified in Australia?

A specialist endodontist holds a qualification in endodontics in addition to all the requirements for general registration as a dentist, and the Dental Board of Australia requires "a minimum of two years general dental practice" before specialist registration. The Board publishes those requirements rather than a course length. You can check registration on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au.

Which Core Dental clinic lists endodontist services?

Our Carrum Downs clinic page lists endodontist services, and our other practices provide root canal therapy through our dentists. Specialist availability varies by practice, so call 13 13 16 and confirm it when you book.

Do I need a referral for root canal treatment at Core Dental?

You do not need a referral to book with us. Most people start with a dentist, who examines the tooth, takes imaging and explains whether a general dentist or a specialist endodontist should treat it.

What should I do if I have a severe toothache at Core Dental?

Call us promptly on 13 13 16 for severe tooth pain or swelling, and we reserve emergency appointments where possible. Call 000 for uncontrollable bleeding, trouble breathing or swallowing, or a serious facial injury.

Does Core Dental offer payment plans for root canal treatment?

Yes. We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free Payright plans at 0% interest for up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months, subject to eligibility and approval. Terms were published as at September 2026, so confirm them when you book.

How do I book root canal care at Core Dental?

Call us on 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. Describe your symptoms, and we will arrange an examination with a dentist who can explain your options, any specialist input and the costs.