

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE CHOOSING A ROOT CANAL OR DENTAL IMPLANT

Before considering a root canal or dental implant, ask your dentist the following questions:

1. How far has the tooth decay progressed?

If the cavity is too deep and too close to the bone level you may be better off with an implant. Why? The cost to benefit ratio of a root canal and crown may not be good. Any dental treatment requires a discussion of the pros and cons with your dentist.

A cavity close to the bone level may not only mean a root canal, a post-core, and a crown, but can also require other costly procedures such as gingivectomy (cutting the gum) or crown lengthening (cutting the bone).

2. What is the prognosis or outcome after a root canal?

A successful root canal is likely but not without its own set of concerns. Once a tooth has been treated with a root canal the tooth:

- Can become brittle and break. Imagine a tooth as a branch of a tree without nutrition and moisture supply from the root it becomes brittle hence prone to breaking.
- Can still get cavities. A root canal and a crown do not guarantee that the tooth will not get cavities around the gum line.
- May get gum irritation around the crown if the crown is not fabricated properly. Treating irritated gums usually requires more than one appointment. It may require cleaning of the infection through the gum and bone (Apicoectomy).



Failed Root Canals



Apicoectomy
& Retrofill

These are costly procedures, and once a tooth has been treated by root canal, many dental insurance policies will not cover additional expenses such as a replacement crown.

If a root canal fails, it is no one's fault as long as this possibility is discussed in advance and you understood all the options. Some root canal failure modes are:

- Failure of the build up or post and core. Even if the root canal is successful, there may not be enough strong tooth structure for crown placement and you may need post and core buildup.



- Lack of tooth structure and not considering in advance the amount of stress. Lack of evaluation of a patient's bite level and compressive force on a tooth, along with other factors can cause failure of the build up. The result can be thousands of dollars wasted for a loose crown with leakage, movement, recurrent cavities, and ultimately failure.

In summary, root canal therapy is a routine procedure, but 100% success is not guaranteed.

Sometimes there is no option except to extract the tooth prior to any action.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. How much will a root canal cost you?
2. How much will a post and core will you?
3. How much will a crown will you?
4. Are you physically, financially, and emotionally able to spend the time and money for a root canal?
5. Is an extraction and implant a better option for you?

All of these questions require a comprehensive evaluation of your condition. A complimentary Dental Health for Life evaluation in our office by our dentist should be a first step. This unique combination of expertise allows our dentists to offer you a treatment based not only on the

condition of the tooth but also your total dental health, medical health, financial circumstances, and personal preferences.

Each patient is unique. Ultimately you are the decision maker, but don't make any decision when you are in pain, desperate, or lack all the information.

Making an ill advised decision due to lack of the facts can cost you thousands of dollars, and stress. If you think you don't have all the facts surrounding your simple tooth that needs a simple root canal, then all you have to do is contact our office and ask for your complimentary consultation.

- Tell us about your problem.
- Tell us how we can help you.
- Be honest about all aspects of your situation, from level of pain to your financial status.
- Let us examine the entire condition of you and your tooth together.
- Listen to us if you trust us, since you will be given a complete range of options available for your tooth condition, your dental stress level, and your financial ability.
- Ask any and all questions in a timely visit dedicated just to you.
- Finally, 'Doctor' comes from the Latin verb 'docere' - 'to teach', and does not mean prescription writer or treatment without consultation. We are here to do our job and 'teach' you.
- The more you know about your treatment, the easier and less stressful your dentist's job and treatment is. The best result comes from working as a team.