

# Root Canal Diagnosis

## Root canal therapy

When the pulp of a tooth becomes infected or dies, root canal therapy is necessary to save the tooth. It is generally comfortable treatment that can save your tooth and keep your mouth healthy.

## Symptoms of infection

You may realize that you have an infected tooth when—

- ❖ the tooth is sensitive to hot or cold.
- ❖ the tooth hurts with biting or pressure.
- ❖ there is throbbing, severe tooth pain.
- ❖ the area is swollen.
- ❖ you have a bad taste in your mouth.

You may also be unaware of the problem because there are no symptoms at all.



*Tapping the tooth*

*Filling the root canals and pulp chamber*



*Infection spreading into the pulp*

## Causes of infection

The pulp becomes infected when bacteria invade the inner layers of the tooth. The tooth pulp is a soft tissue made up of nerves and blood vessels. It is contained in the pulp chamber that extends from the middle of the tooth down through the tooth roots.

Infection occurs most commonly through a deep cavity that allows bacteria through the enamel and dentin layers and into the pulp. Sometimes the pulp simply dies due to a fracture or a blow to the tooth.

## Diagnosis and treatment

To determine if your tooth has an infected pulp, we do a thorough examination. The exam often includes x-rays and sometimes includes checking the health of the pulp with a pulp tester. We may also apply heat or cold, tap lightly on the tooth to see if it is sensitive, look for changes in the tooth's color, or press gently on the gums next to the tooth to check for pain.

If we determine that you have an infected tooth, we talk with you about root canal therapy to remove the infection and save the tooth. It is important to treat an infected tooth in order to prevent the infection from traveling through the root tips and causing a painful abscess in the jawbone.