

# Macoupin County Public Health Department

## Public Service Announcement

### **Giving Teeth Another Chance**

Saving your natural teeth is always the best option, if possible. There are numerous ways to accomplish this, with Root Canal Treatment (RCT) being one of them. Nothing can replace the look or function of natural teeth. Considering endodontic treatment for your teeth should always be an option. Advancement in the field of Endodontics has resulted in high success rates for saving patients' natural teeth, making them last lifetime.

The information you may find on 'Dr. Google' or elsewhere on the internet can be misleading. Even the thought of getting a RCT can make you fearful or anxious if you are not familiar with the procedure. Common misconceptions among people for getting an endodontic procedure are that they cause pain or illness and should be avoided at all costs. Some even think it's better to pull the tooth rather than have a root canal procedure performed. In fact, the exact opposite is true.

#### ***What is a Root Canal Treatment (RCT)?***

The term "root canal" originally translates from the phrase 'the cleaning of canals of a tooth's root'. It is an endodontic procedure which means treating the inside of a tooth. Inner structure of our teeth has a soft core called dental pulp. The pulp contains nerves, blood vessels and connective tissue. When decay or bacteria reaches the pulp, chances are it will become inflamed or infected. RCT is designed to eliminate bacteria from infected root canals. The canals are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to remove infected or inflamed pulp, which are then filled and sealed.

#### ***How will you know if your tooth needs a root canal?***

Visiting your dentist is the only way to know for sure. Several diagnostic tools used by a dentist, can lead to a diagnosis for endodontic procedure. However, numerous warning signs to be on the lookout for are

- Persistent pain (throbbing, sharp shooting or referred)
- Lingering sensitivity to hot and cold
- Swollen/ tender or pimple on gums
- Tooth discoloration
- Pain when you eat or touch the tooth
- Cracked or chipped tooth
- Tooth mobility

After a thorough dental examination, using various diagnostic tools, such as X-rays, a definitive diagnosis is made to perform a root canal procedure. The final stage is restoring the tooth. Since the tooth is weakened from decay, it needs to be protected from future damage. In order to restore its normal functionality, a crown (a realistic looking artificial tooth) is applied. A crown is made up of either gold, porcelain, or porcelain fused to metal. For additional structural support, sometimes a post (metal/ fiber) is recommended to keep the crown in place.

Saving the natural tooth with RCT has many advantages including enhancement of the patient's natural appearance, restoring functionality, preventing spread of infection to adjacent teeth, eliminating pain and enhancing oral and overall health.

With the latest advancements in technology, a modern root canal treatment is nothing like it used to be. Since patients are given anesthesia, it's very similar to getting a routine filling or a tooth pulled. Depending on your tooth condition, it can be completed in one or two appointments so smiling, chewing, and biting with comfort can be restored in no time.

We, at Macoupin County Public Health Department (MCPHD), are equipped with the latest technology and tools to treat individuals who need endodontic procedures. Our team of General Dentists are skilled, efficient and trained to tackle various situations in terms of root canal therapy. You have the power to keep your teeth and we are here to help you!

Dr. Ankit Malhotra DMD, BDS  
Macoupin County Public Health Department

###