

## Patient information

### Root Canal Treatment In Oral Diagnosis Clinic

#### Liverpool University Dental Hospital

The Oral Diagnosis Clinic may start Root Canal Treatment as part of your care. This is an emergency treatment to relieve pain. After this your tooth will be filled with a temporary filling and you will be asked to arrange for the completion of the treatment with your own dentist.

#### **What is root canal treatment?**

Root canal treatment (also called endodontics) is necessary when the nerve or blood supply of a tooth (the pulp) becomes damaged or infected. This usually develops from dental decay or injury (such as a knock to a tooth).

#### **What happens during root canal treatment?**

Root canal treatment involves removing the damaged pulp tissue, cleaning the inside of the tooth (pulp space and root canals) and placing a filling in the root. X-rays will be taken during root canal and after root treatment.

During root canal treatment you will receive a local anaesthetic to prevent any pain, this is just like having an ordinary filling. Root treatment often takes longer than having a filling and may involve two or more visits.

#### **Only the first part of your treatment will be completed here.**

Following root treatment, more visits will then be needed to restore the tooth - this could be a simple filling or crown. The final restoration is very important because it can improve the appearance of a tooth, help to protect a tooth from breaking (fracturing) and very importantly it seals in the root filling and prevents bacteria from entering the tooth. In between visits, the tooth has a temporary filling placed in it. Your dentist will advise you on the best type of restoration to restore your tooth.

Generally, teeth at the front of the mouth (incisors and canines) are easier and quicker to treat than teeth at the back of the mouth (premolars and molars). In front teeth, the root canals tend to be single and straight (and so are easier to treat).

The root canals in back teeth have more than one root canal and are often curved along their length.

Occasionally, root treatment is unsuccessful and needs to be repeated.

Sometimes surgery is needed to the root to remove any infection.

### **Is there any alternative treatment?**

If you do not want root canal treatment you could have the tooth extracted. Not all teeth can have a root canal treatment. If there is extensive decay in the tooth or a fracture, this may not be possible.

### **What will happen if I have no treatment?**

If the tooth remains untreated then the infection will remain and possibly spread. You may suffer from severe toothache. A painful abscess can develop and cause a large swelling in your mouth and/or face. If the swelling contains pus it may need to be lanced (incised) to allow the infection to drain. Rarely, a dental abscess may cause a serious infection that requires you to be admitted to hospital as an emergency.

### **What kind of anaesthetic will I be given?**

Local anaesthetic will be injected into part of your mouth so it goes numb. Like all medicines, local anaesthetics may sometimes cause side effects, as well as the effects that are needed. You may experience dizziness, blurred vision, drowsiness and occasionally loss of consciousness.

Serious side effects are rare, and include fits, low blood pressure, slowed breathing and changes in heartbeat, which may be life-threatening.

**If you have any concerns about any of these effects, you should discuss them with your dentist.**

### **Who will carry out my root treatment?**

Root canal treatment is a common dental procedure that most dentists provide. Root canal therapy is available on the National Health Service (NHS) from some dentists. However, not all dentists will provide root canal therapy to back teeth or replace an existing root filling that has failed.

These teeth need a high degree of skill from your dentist and he or she may advise you to see a specialist - this may not be on the NHS and you will be charged a private fee. Root canal therapy can take several hours to complete, depending upon how complex the tooth is. You should ask your dentist for an estimate of how expensive the treatment will be.

### **What can happen if I do not continue with my root canal treatment?**

If you have started root canal treatment you must continue with it as soon as possible, otherwise you are at risk of developing toothache, a dental abscess and losing the tooth at a later date.

### **Problems registering with a dentist?**

The team at Healthwatch Liverpool are the first point of call for patients needing health services. Contact them for information or help to find the services that are right for you.

**Telephone: 03300 77 77 007**

**Text phone number: 18001 0300 77 77 007**

(Calls cost the same as a local landline number and they will call you back to keep your bill down)

**Text: 07842 552 878**

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk)

NB: for other local teams, access:  
[www.healthwatch.co.uk/find-local-healthwatch](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/find-local-healthwatch)

## Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further Information:

**Oral Diagnosis Clinic**  
**Liverpool University Dental Hospital**  
**Tel: 0151 706 5060/0151 706 5807**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 5060**

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