

**DENTAL ASSOCIATES OF LEOMINSTER**  
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**What Is A Root Canal Therapy (RCT)?**

**These are only some of the answers and information pertaining to conventional Root Canal Treatments (RCT) and follow-up restorative treatments.**

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A TOOTH THAT MAY NEED RCT?** A tooth which is: very painful, highly sensitive to HOT/COLD temperatures, sensitive to percussion or biting, a tooth greatly broken (fractured) or has decay near or into the pulp, a tooth with extremely large fillings, or infections causing swelling or a terrible taste with the mouth.

**WHAT IS A RCT?:** A tooth is a closed organ with blood vessels and nerve tissue entering and exiting the tooth at the end of the root, which supplies the tooth with nutrients and sensation. Once these tissues are infected, inflamed or the space is needed to restore the tooth, a root canal is needed. The canal(s) are accessed through the top of the tooth crown and the tissues are removed. The canal is then sealed near or at the opening of the root.

**WHY HAVE A RCT?:** It is usually advised to keep a natural tooth as long as possible and whenever possible. A natural tooth is anchored and properly spaced in the jaw bone. This is important for function and dental health.

**DOES A ROOT CANAL HURT?:** Usually NOT, however, a prior infection is a great source of pain and once a RCT is initiated there is little to no sensation.

**HOW IS A ROOT CANAL TREATMENT DONE?:** The tooth is numbed very well and protective rubber covering isolates the tooth which is held in place by a clamp. An opening is made into the pulp chamber. The tooth is then hollowed out and all of the soft tissues removed and the canals cleaned and shaped. A sealer is placed and a piece of GUTTA PERCHA (gum-like material) is heated with a very hot instrument. The gutta percha is condensed down while it is softened to create a seal at the end of the root. Several X-RAYS may be taken during the treatment. ANTIBIOTICS may also be prescribed.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A RCT?:** The canals are sealed, however the tooth structure is hollowed and the remaining wall may be unsupported. Thus, a rigid POST is placed into the canal and cemented. The remaining space is then filled with a CORE MATERIAL which is added to create substance and structure to the tooth. A crown is usually placed as a final restoration soon after the POST & CORE is placed.

**WHY MUST A FINAL RESTORATION BE PLACED AFTER A RCT?:** Because the tooth has been hollowed and the tissues removed, the remaining tooth may become brittle over time, causing the remaining walls of the tooth to become susceptible to fracture and recurrent decay. A CROWN is usually the final restoration of choice to aid in the protection of the remaining tooth.

**\*\*AS A FINAL NOTE YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT CONVENTIONAL ROOT CANAL THERAPY IS NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE AND THAT THERE ARE FAILURES. THERE MAY BE REASONS FOR THE TREATED TOOTH TO BE FURTHER TREATED OR REMOVED.\*\* A ROOT CANAL SHOULD BE CARED FOR LIKE A NATURAL TOOTH AND MUST BE CHECKED AND CLEANED REGULARLY. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS? ASK QUESTIONS ANY TIME!!**