

## WHAT IS ROOT CANAL TREATMENT?

If your tooth's nerve chamber becomes infected by decay, or damaged by injury, root canal treatment is often the only way to save your tooth.

Inside the enamel (hard outer shell of the tooth) is a specific area called the pulp or nerve chamber. The pulp chamber contains blood vessels and nerves to provide nutrients for the tooth.

Deep cavities or other injury can cause damage to or infection of the tooth pulp. In a root canal, the dentist removes the damaged or infected pulp and replaces it with a special filler which helps protect the rest of the tooth. This filler will probably last a lifetime but you may need a new filling or a cap on the tooth. Without root canal treatment, the gum and bone around the tooth may become infected and a painful gumboil may form.

### QUICK FACTS ABOUT ROOT CANAL TREATMENT:

You may need root canal treatment if you have:

- Pain or throbbing while biting
- Pain when eating/drinking hot or cold beverages/foods
- Deep cavity or injury that causes an infection in the bone
- Color change/darkening of the tooth
- Swelling in nearby gum

### HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO HELP PREVENT ROOT CANAL TREATMENT:

- Brush and floss your teeth twice a day. Use a soft toothbrush and a fluoride toothpaste.
- Visit your dentist regularly to have your teeth checked.
- Have cavities fixed early so that infection cannot reach the nerve of the tooth.
- If playing a contact sport, ask your dentist about wearing a mouth guard.
- If your mouth and/or teeth are hurt, have them checked by a dentist as soon as possible.

Be sure to follow the special home care instructions provided by your dental professional