



Getting to the root of the problem . . .



DR. CHRISTOPH MICHEL

Your root canal questions

Years ago if a tooth had nerve damage it was very common to extract the tooth. Taking away the immediate problem was a "quick fix". By doing so then you are affecting other teeth in the mouth, thus creating future dental problems and dental bills. Most adults can say they have had or know someone that has had a root canal. Question is do those patients know what a root canal is, why it's needed, and why it should be done? After reading this article you will better understand the purpose of this common dental procedure. With experience, technology, and tools that are available at By the Sea Dentistry, Dr. Michel and his staff, are able to provide for you and your root canal therapy needs.

WHY DO I NEED A ROOT CANAL?

A patient can require a root canal for a number of reasons including: severe tooth pain while

chewing or application of pressure, persistent sensitivity or pain to hot and cold temperatures, or darkening of the tooth. These symptoms can happen if there has been trauma to the tooth, decay that has reached into the tooth's nerve, a large filling, an abscess, or even a crack in the tooth.

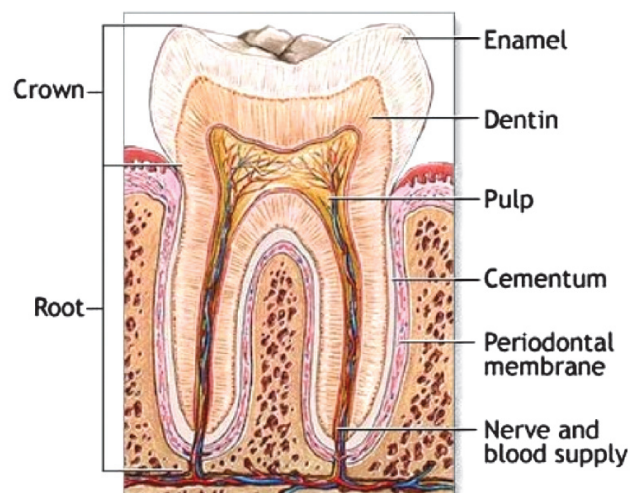
WHAT IS A ROOT CANAL?

Inside each tooth there is a nerve that runs down the canals of a tooth through the root. When it is decided you need a root canal the nerve is removed. If you don't remove it then it could cause pain or swelling, and you could risk losing your tooth. After the dentist removes the nerve, the canal is cleaned and sealed off to prevent it from re-infection. Your dentist then places a crown over the tooth to help make it stronger and give the newly restored tooth longevity.

WHAT INSTRUMENTS AND MATERIALS ARE USED?

First and foremost you will be numb in the area that is being worked on and it is done the same as if you were having a filling completed. Dr. Michel

will use instruments like rotary files which will cut down on the post operative sensitivity and will be less traumatic to the tooth. Other instruments such as the ultrasonic cleaning hand piece are used to remove all the nerve and help aid in finding all canals in the tooth. Dr. Michel also uses magnification to help find all the canals as some teeth have



more canals than others. To fill the canal or canals, warm gutta percha is placed/ sealed inside them. A temporary 3-dimensional crown is created and placed on the tooth. During this entire process Dr. Michel will take an x-

ray as needed with a digital x-ray unit. The doctor and you will be able to see an instant image on the monitor. At the same time, our state of the art digital x-rays, decrease the exposure of radiation to the patient by 50%.

WHY DO I NEED A CROWN ON THIS TOOTH?

A root canal is a treatment used to repair and save a tooth that is badly decayed or becomes infected. During a root canal procedure, the nerve and pulp are removed and the inside of the tooth is cleaned and sealed. When the pulp is removed this naturally weakens the tooth. This is why a crown is needed to strengthen the tooth. It can be done in two visits and will be created to look similar to your other teeth. People will not know you have had any dental work completed.

HOW SUCCESSFUL ARE ROOT CANALS?

Having a root canal procedure is a highly successful therapy and

has more than a 95% success rate. A root canal tooth can last a lifetime if continual and proper dental care is received. Other alternatives to fix the problem would be an implant, bridge, or a partial denture.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Some people are scared that this procedure will be painful. Actually you will be numb and once the nerve is removed there should be no pain at all. Possible soreness to the area can occur once the numbness wears off but only lasts for a short period of time. Patients have asked if crowning a vital tooth will cause it to need a root canal. A crown is put on for the main reason to protect that tooth and not lose it. If it is crowned and then becomes necessary to have a root canal, it can be still be completed through the crown.

Please feel free to call our office and schedule for a consultation with Dr. Michel to discuss your dental needs.
(609)927-9300

Tooth Anatomy Picture courtesy of <http://scienceblogs.com/afarensis/upload/2006/03/tooth-anatomy.jpg>

Dr. Christoph Michel received his dental degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He completed a general practice residency at Muhlenberg Hospital in Bethlehem, PA, which was followed by a three-year associate position in a family practice in Hammonton, NJ.

Being a dedicated father of two, Dr. Michel is also a former president of the Atlantic-Cape May Dental Society and he is also about to receive his fellowship into the Academy of General Dentistry. Dr. Michel continues to give back to the community by donating his time every year during National Dental Health Week to the area primary schools to educate children on the importance of their oral hygiene.

Dr. Michel has been managing his own practice since 2000. By the Sea Dentistry is located at 235 Shore Road Somers Point, NJ 08244 (609) 927-9300 Visit us at www.bytheseadentistry.com

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