



Puyallup Tribal Health Authority

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Things to remember about your root canal:

Until your root canal is complete:

- Avoid chewing hard foods
- Avoid pressure on the tooth
- Brush and floss daily
- Be sure to get a current exam

Contact the clinic immediately if:

- Pain continues or worsens
- Filling breaks or loosens
- Tooth becomes loose
- Bad/sour taste in mouth

Due to the amount of time required to complete root canal treatment (possibly several long appointments), along with the many patients who need root canal treatment, you will be placed on a waiting list to receive an appointment for your root canal to be completed. Your root canal may remain incomplete for months. During this time, please monitor your tooth closely and contact the clinic if any problems arise.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Puyallup Tribal Health Authority (PTHA) to provide quality health care and promote wellness in a culturally appropriate manner.



Information for patients who need
Root Canal Treatment

Puyallup Tribal Health Authority





how is a root CANAL DONE?

Root canal treatment involves 3 steps. Your root canal will not be completed during urgent care. Several visits are necessary to complete the process.

1 First, the nerve must be removed and any infection cleaned from the tooth. Then a temporary filling is placed. This step may need to be repeated if the tooth again becomes painful or infected.

- 2** The second step requires a much longer appointment. The canals must be exactly measured, cleaned and shaped to be filled with a permanent stable material. This protects the tooth from future infection.
- 3** Finally, a stronger permanent restoration must be placed on top of the tooth for strength and stability.

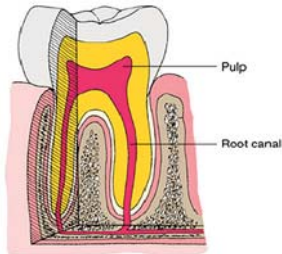


Why do I need a root canal?

A root canal is needed for a tooth that has experienced irreversible damage to the pulp. The pulp is the innermost layer of the tooth and contains a nerve. The damage can be caused by bacteria (a cavity) or fracture (crack) and is usually painful.

A damaged nerve inside a tooth **MUST** be removed to prevent infection.

Root Canal Therapy is the process of removing an injured nerve and placing a filling within the canals to protect against infection.



Before beginning root canal therapy, it is important to first determine whether the tooth is strong enough to be restored (fixed with a filling). If the decay has extended too far around the tooth or under the gumline, the tooth may be too difficult to restore and instead should be extracted (pulled).

What's Next?

DURING URGENT CARE VISITS, ONLY THE FIRST STEP OF THE ROOT CANAL IS COMPLETED. There is just enough time to clean any painful nerves/infection from the tooth.

The second step (measuring, shaping and filling the canals) is a lengthy process and there is not enough time during an urgent care visit to complete this phase.

IN ORDER TO HAVE YOUR ROOT CANAL COMPLETED, YOU MUST FIRST HAVE A CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE EXAM. This way the dentist can be sure that all your oral health needs are cared for in a prioritized manner.

Even after the root canal has been completed, your tooth will remain at much higher risk of fracture (cracking). Fractures are often difficult to detect and can be very damaging. To reduce this risk, a restoration will be made for your tooth at a separate appointment.

Root canal treatment is not always successful. Despite all efforts, your tooth may eventually need to be extracted (pulled) if it continues to be harmed by future decay, infection, or fracture.

Will it hurt?

The dentist will fully anesthetize (numb) the tooth and surrounding area before any treatment. As long as the tooth is completely numb you should feel no pain during your visit.

After the anesthetic wears off, the area may feel sore or painful. This is because the area around the root of the tooth remains slightly inflamed while it is healing.

If your pain does not gradually resolve or becomes much worse, please contact the clinic as you may need further treatment.

Do I need medication?

Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) are most helpful to calm the area. You may be prescribed pain medication to help you during healing.

It may be necessary to take antibiotics if an infection from your tooth has spread to an extent that it may be difficult for your body to resolve. If the dentist prescribes antibiotics, it is very important to complete the entire course of antibiotics. This ensures that they are effective.

