WHY ROOT CANAL TREATMENT OR SURGERY?

Why do I need a root canal? Teeth can become inflamed or infected for many reasons, such as deep decay, exposure of the pulp through a crack or repeated dental procedures, leakage under aging fillings and crowns, traumatic injuries to the tooth and surrounding area, periodontal disease, and cracks or infections in the bottom of the tooth under the gumline. Signs of pulp damage include (but are not limited to) sensitivity to hot, cold or sweets, tooth discoloration, swelling and tenderness in nearby gums, and pain. A large percentage of infections have very minimal pain or other exterior symptoms, and may only be discovered on an xray at your routine exam. If left untreated, these infections can lead to pain, a spread of infection to the bone and other areas, and loss of the tooth and its function.

I already had a root canal. Why do I need another one? In some cases, teeth that have already had endodontic treatment will become reinfected: this can happen due to new trauma, new decay, a crack in the tooth, a loose or aged filling/crown, the permanent restoration wasn’t completed in time to prevent reinfection, or occasionally from the discovery of a very narrow or curved canal that couldn’t be treated the first time. In these cases, the original replacement materials will be removed, the canals and any previously untreated areas re-cleaned, and new replacement fillings placed.

I had a root canal, and now they say I might need a surgery. Why is that? Sometimes, an infection that has been growing out of the root tip into the bone will form a defensive casing around it that will not resolve after traditional root canal treatment. You might also have a small crack or untreated area in one or more of the tips of the roots, which cannot be repaired from the crown. These infections and defects can be removed through a minor surgical procedure called an apicoectomy, where the tip of the root and any attached growth are removed and the area cleaned of infection. Making sure that all areas of the tooth and surrounding bone are cleaned of infection and sealed will dramatically improve healing time and long-term survival of your tooth.

Why should I have a root canal instead of an implant or bridge? Saving our natural teeth is preferable whenever possible, because nothing looks, feels or functions quite the same as a natural tooth, which we need for proper chewing and biting functions. Implants are often more expensive than the procedures required to save a tooth, and require longer healing time. There are times when a tooth cannot be saved due to severe fracture, inadequate bone support or restorable tooth structure, or canals that cannot be accessed for cleaning. In this instance, you will be referred back to your general dentist or another specialist for replacement options appropriate to your case.

What technology do you use? We use state-of-the-art technologies and techniques to diagnose and treat your teeth. Our Kodak Digital Radiography (x-ray) system and Kodak 9000 focused-field CBCT Scan allow us to diagnose more effectively, and enable visualization of previously hidden disease. We also use Zeiss ProErgo Surgical Operating Microscopes with digital photography, allowing Dr. Schneider to view and document findings in your tooth at 24 magnification. Use of these technologies has allowed Dr. Schneider to pioneer techniques and treatment protocols for advanced endodontic disease.