

Root canal therapy is the prescribed treatment when the pulp (nerve) of the tooth has become diseased. This is usually because of deep tooth decay or trauma to the tooth. When the pulp becomes diseased, some form of discomfort is usually present. This may be in the form of temperature or pressure sensitivity or in the form of toothache pain. In either case, to perform a root canal, the tooth is made numb with local anesthetic (novocaine). The decay is removed from the tooth, and the hollow root canals are comfortably cleaned and sealed, removing the diseased pulp in the process. While root canals have a reputation for being uncomfortable, with modern techniques root canals are virtually always painless. With root canal therapy, teeth that would otherwise have to be extracted can be saved. In most cases, a tooth that has had a root canal needs to be restored with a FULL CROWN to protect it against the strong forces of chewing.