

**WHEN MRS LIM** went to her dentist with tooth pain, the simple words “root canal” filled her with dread. But after having the painless procedure performed, she realised her worry was for naught.

Albert had been nervous and apprehensive of the dentist ever since he had a bad experience as a child, and he was particularly anxious when he was told he needed a root canal. He spoke with his dentist, and was referred to an endodontic specialist to perform the procedure and realised later his fears were unfounded.

Misplaced fears like Mrs Lim and Albert aren’t uncommon. In large scale surveys done by the American Association of Endodontists (AAE), nearly half (48.5%) of survey respondents said they perceived root canal treatment as “excruciatingly painful,” and ranked the treatment just below a spinal tap in terms of discomfort.



For both health and cosmetic reasons, saving a natural tooth should be the first alternative you consider. In most cases, a damaged tooth can be saved through endodontic (root canal) treatment. Dentists, who specialise in root canal treatment, have rendered the procedure virtually painless. Using the latest dental technologies, endodontists have transformed procedures that once were completed with the naked eye and standard dental instruments into modern microsurgery. Endodontists’ expertise in performing root canals, their advanced training in administering anaesthesia, and their use of technologies not generally utilised by general dentists, result in a more positive patient experience. Endodontists also make root canal treatment more effective and predictable. Procedures that used to take multiple visits of about two hours each, can often be completed in a single visit of about an hour.

Many endodontists also use digital imaging instead of traditional X-rays. Digital imaging exposes patients to only a fraction of the radiation they typically get with X-rays. Both patients and endodontists can see the results almost immediately, without waiting

# EASY WAY TO SAVE YOUR TEETH

for X-rays to be produced. In addition, digital images can be viewed up to 30 times the size of traditional X-rays, so patients can more clearly understand and follow information about their procedure.

## DISPELLING THE MYTHS

The myths surrounding root canal treatment continue, and extend beyond concerns about pain. Many people believe that root canal treatment is expensive compared to other options, when it actually costs hundreds of dollars less than getting an implant. Because of the increasing popularity of dental implants, patients may not realise the long-term implications of the procedure or that root canals may be healthier and less complicated in the long run.

Dental implants involve at least one or more surgical procedures, are more complex and often require several visits and months to complete. With more and more long-term studies that show similar success rates between root canal treated teeth and dental implants, the decision to save a tooth with root canal treatment or extraction and dental implants, should be based on factors other than outcome, such as case complexity or the patient’s individual health and preferences. It is simply untrue that root canal treated teeth have worse success rates than dental implants.

The techniques endodontists use today not only make root canal treatment less painful, they also result in teeth that can last a lifetime. So make the decision to save your own teeth, it really is easier than you think.

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