

For Virtually Painless Root Canal Treatment, Call in the Reliever—An Endodontist

(NAPSA)—Root canal treatment, one of the most feared dental procedures, is enjoying a more positive reputation among patients these days. If you, like many people, think a root canal means hours of anguish in your dentist's chair, you'll be pleased to learn that most root canal treatments now take less than an hour and can be virtually painless. The key to ensuring a positive experience is choosing the right professional to perform your procedure.

Your dentist may be well qualified to handle uncomplicated root canals. For more challenging procedures, however, it may make more sense for you to visit an endodontist. Endodontists are dentists who specialize in performing root canal treatments and relieving oral and facial pain. Following four years of dental school, they complete an additional two to three years of advanced training in endodontics, the science of treating problems with the tissue inside the tooth. On average, endodontists perform 25 root canal treatments each week. In contrast, general practitioners perform approximately two a week.

Endodontists have incorporated advanced technologies, such as digital imaging and operating microscopes, into root canal treatments, resulting in greater accuracy and virtually painless visits for their patients. These improvements, coupled with endodontists' expertise in administering local anesthesia, translate into a more positive patient experience.

Common Endodontic Symptoms

If you experience any of the symptoms listed below, you may need a root canal. Visit your dentist or local endodontist for evaluation and treatment, or go to www.rootcanalspecialists.org for additional information.

- Momentary sensitivity or lingering tooth pain caused by hot or cold foods
- Sharp tooth pain when biting down on food
- Constant and severe tooth pain and pressure in conjunction with swelling of the gums and sensitivity to touch



A 2003 survey of root canal patients conducted by research firm L.C. Williams & Associates showed that the vast majority (85 percent) of individuals who had their root canals performed by endodontists would return to them for future procedures.

How should you decide if you need to visit an endodontist for your root canal? Ask your dentist. Dentists often send their patients to endodontists for root canal treatment, so it's not unusual or inappropriate to ask if such a visit is warranted. In fact, a study conducted by the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) showed that 97 percent of dentists refer patients to endodontists for root canal treatments and other endodontic procedures.

To find an endodontist in your area, either ask your dentist for a referral, or search for one online using the "Find an Endodontist" tool available on the AAE Web site, www.rootcanalspecialists.org.