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10  
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## ROOT CANAL TREATMENT CAN SAVE INFECTED TOOTH FROM BEING EXTRACTED



KUBANG KERIAN, KELANTAN, 10 June 2016 – When bacteria (germs) invade the centre of a tooth called the root canal system which is filled with soft dental pulp made up of nerves and blood vessels, it causes severe pain and/or swelling to the tooth, to the point where the pain becomes unbearable and the only solution seems to be to have the infected tooth removed.

However, according to a Restorative Dentistry Specialist (Endodontic) from the School of Dental Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Dr. Nik Rozainah Nik Abdul Ghani, a dental procedure called the root canal treatment can help to relieve severe toothache without having to pull the tooth out.

"Root canal treatment, also known as endodontic treatment, helps to repair and save a severely damaged tooth due to infection in order to maintain the function of the tooth," she said, adding that bacteria (germs) can enter our tooth through deep cavities, cracks, flawed fillings or damage to the tooth as a result of trauma such as a fall.

"By having a root canal done, the affected tooth can be saved from being extracted and having it replaced with an artificial tooth, prevent the toothache from getting worse and ensure that the infection does not spread to other teeth or other parts of our body such as the eyes, throat or ears," she said.



Nik Rozainah said, the first step in the procedure is to take an X-ray to see condition of the tooth, the shape of the root canals and determine if there are any signs of infection in the surrounding bone.

"Next is to keep the area dry, free of saliva and separated from the other surrounding teeth, in which a rubber dam (a sheet of rubber) will be placed around the tooth.

"The inflamed or infected pulp is then removed and the inside of the tooth is carefully cleaned and disinfected, then filled and sealed with a rubber-like material called gutta-percha," she explained further.

She added: "The tooth is restored with a crown or filling for protection. With proper care, most teeth that have had root canal treatment will function as much like a natural tooth as possible, and can last a lifetime."

“Root canal treatment helps us maintain our natural smile, continue eating the foods we love and limits the need for ongoing dental work,” she said, adding that root canal treatment is strongly recommended for those who want to save a badly decayed/infected tooth from being extracted.

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