



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Saving Teeth, One Root Canal at a Time

Dispelling common myths about root canals

Oak Brook, Ill. (August 27, 2008) -- Root canals have long suffered from a bad reputation, but one that is a bit unfair. The procedure is actually an important tool dentists use to save teeth that otherwise could be lost or severely infected.

“People who have experienced the procedure recently will tell you that it’s not so bad, especially when you consider the alternative,” says Max Anderson, DDS, a national oral health advisor for Delta Dental Plans Association. “Once you understand what to expect and some of the common misconceptions about root canal therapy, there is really little need for anxiety.”

Dr. Anderson identified a few of the most common misunderstandings about root canals.

Myth 1: Root canals are painful and lengthy procedures.

Advances in techniques and equipment have made root canals quicker, easier and less uncomfortable than ever before. In many cases, the procedure is completed during a single office visit.

Myth 2: Root canals remove the roots of the teeth.

Under the hard enamel of the tooth lie nerves and tissue, also called pulp. An existing cavity or trauma to the tooth can create a pathway for bacteria to pass through the tooth and reach the pulp. The resulting infection can become very painful and harmful to the health of the tooth. A root canal procedure involves removing the nerve and pulp of the tooth, cleaning the inside of the tooth and sealing it to prevent the reentry of bacteria and further decay and infection.

Myth 3: If you need a root canal, you’ll know it.

There are some common symptoms that can point to the need for a root canal. A severe toothache, swelling or small sores on your gums, prolonged sensitivity to hot and cold or a darkened tooth, can all indicate an infection in the tooth. In some cases, there are no symptoms present, so it’s important to see your dentist for exams and cleanings so he or she can assess the state of your oral health.

“If you experience any pain, swelling or other changes in your mouth, it’s important to see your dentist right away so he or she can determine the problem and prescribe the best course of treatment,” said Dr. Anderson. “Only your dentist knows for sure when a root canal may be required to save a tooth.”

Delta Dental Plans Association, based in Oak Brook, Ill., is a national network of independent not-for-profit dental service corporations specializing in providing dental benefits programs to 51 million Americans in more than 93,000 employee groups throughout the country.

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