

# Saving Your Natural Teeth and Your Money— Root Canals Offer Healthier, Cheaper Alternative to Extraction

(NAPSA)—If you think that having a tooth pulled is the easiest and least expensive way to treat serious tooth pain, think again. The truth is, from both a health and financial standpoint, saving your natural teeth is almost always your best option.

The reason? Dentistry has yet to produce a dental implant or bridge that functions as well as a natural tooth. Artificial teeth, for instance, can cause you to avoid certain foods, including fruits and vegetables necessary to maintaining a healthy diet.

In addition, the overall cost of having a tooth pulled often surpasses the cost of treating and keeping your natural tooth. While an extraction may take only moments, the tooth should be replaced to keep other teeth from shifting and to prevent future gum disease. The subsequent placement of an implant or bridge requires time-consuming, expensive and sometimes painful treatment, and may result in further procedures to adjacent teeth and supporting tissues.

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. Although many people shudder at the very mention of root canals, endodontists, the dentists who specialize in root canal treatment, have rendered the procedure virtually painless.

“Endodontists are specially trained to ease patients’ fear and help them avoid pain before, during and after a procedure,” said Sandra Madison, D.D.S., M.S., president of the American Association of Endodontists.

During root canal treatment, the endodontist removes the inflamed or infected pulp (soft tissue within

## What is Endodontics?

Endodontics is the science of treating problems with the tissue inside the tooth. When this or the tissue surrounding the tooth root is diseased or damaged due to decay or injury, endodontists typically can save the tooth by performing a root canal. During root canal treatment, the endodontist removes the inflamed or infected pulp and then cleans, fills and seals the canals inside the tooth. Endodontists are also experts at diagnosing and relieving oral and facial pain. For more information, visit [www.rootcanalspecialists.org](http://www.rootcanalspecialists.org).



your tooth), carefully cleans and shapes the inside of the canal (a channel inside the root), then fills and seals the space. Most procedures take less than one hour. Afterward, you return to your dentist, who places a crown or other restoration on the tooth. Ultimately, it functions just like any other tooth. Better yet, root canal-treated teeth can last a lifetime.

If your dentist recommends tooth extraction, ask whether a root canal is an option—and if not, why not. Don’t be shy in asking for a referral to an endodontist for a second opinion. If your dentist recommends a root canal, discuss having an endodontist perform the procedure. While general dentists typically perform only two root canal treatments per week, endodontists perform an average of 25, and are in the best position to save your natural tooth.

You can always help maintain good oral health by eating a healthy diet and brushing and flossing regularly. If that’s not enough, your dentist or endodontist can provide treatment to save your natural teeth, let you chew comfortably and continue to enjoy the foods you love. Now that’s something to smile about!