

Root Canal Therapy vs. Implant vs. Bridge

Options for Repairing or Replacing a Dying Tooth

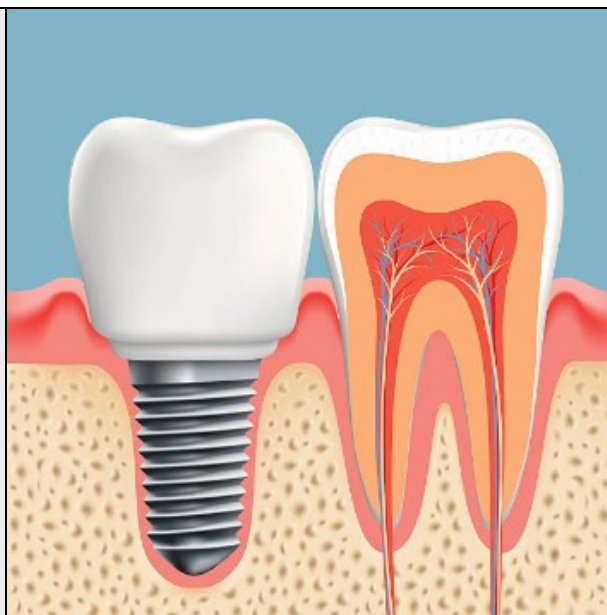
When a tooth has decayed or broken beyond the point of repair, it must have either a root canal treatment (RCT) or be completely removed.

While it's quicker and more affordable to just "pull a tooth," there are advantages to having RCT instead.

If that's not possible, a missing tooth should be replaced with either an implant or a bridge.

We'll examine the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options in this article.

Before comparing the three, it's important to understand why we shouldn't leave any gaps in the mouth.



Dental implant (left) and diagram of root canals (right).

When a tooth is missing, the adjacent and opposing teeth will start drifting into the open space, changing alignment and bite.

This not only ruins a straight smile, but affects chewing and speaking, and may cause jaw pain.

Eventually, the area without a tooth will suffer bone loss, which changes the shape of the face and makes it more difficult to place an implant should you desire one later on.

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WHAT'S INSIDE



Hot and Cold
Sensitivity



Tooth Repair,
Continued

— Hot n' Cold —

Why Your Teeth Are Sensitive to Temperature

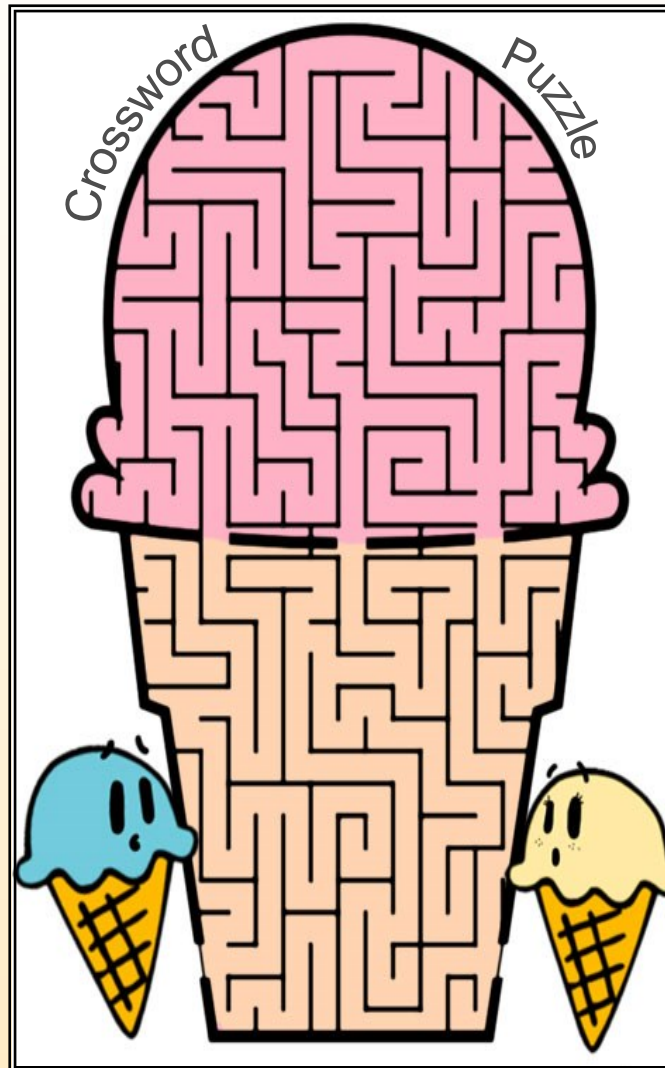
It's summer, it's hot, and we all scream for ice cream!

July is National Ice Cream Month, and July 16th is National Ice Cream Day, celebrating the ultra-popular sweet treat.

For some people, though, ice cream, frozen yogurt, popsicles and the like are associated with tooth pain. This cold – or heat – sensitivity happens for a variety of reasons.

Worn enamel or receding gums are the most common causes of temperature-related pain. Also, grinding can wear down the tooth and expose the inner nerve.

Chipped or cracked teeth are also prone to pain. Sensitivity that also happens when not eating cold or hot foods is likely caused by tooth decay or gum disease.



Protect your enamel by brushing gently, using whitening products sparingly, avoiding acidic foods (such as citrus fruit, energy drinks, and soda), and wearing a nightguard to protect against grinding

damage.

Gum recession can be avoided by following a thorough dental hygiene routine that includes brushing twice per day, flossing once per day, rinsing with mouth-

wash and cleaning your tongue.

Using specialized toothpastes and other products with potassium nitrate and fluoride will help by weakening nerve feeling and protecting enamel.

These ingredients may take several weeks to have an effect.

More drastic sensitivity may require a filling, crown, root canal treatment, or gum grafting.

Whatever the cause, temperature sensitivity can take the joy out of many foods, but with proper care and repair, you can return to enjoying all of your favorite flavors.

If you have tooth sensitivity and want to stop it, we can help. Call us at (760) 810-7297.

Repairing/Replacing a Tooth, Continued

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RCT is called for when decay has reached the inside of a tooth, the pulp/nerve inside the tooth is dead, the tooth is fractured and/or the tooth is hypersensitive to the point of constant pain.

To fix the problem, Dr. Sun will open the tooth to access the root canal(s) inside the tooth and completely remove the nerve and all other material. This eliminates the tooth's ability to feel pain.

Dr. Sun will refill the now-empty canal(s) with gutta percha, a plastic substance, and cover the open part of the tooth with a filling and a crown. This process usually takes two or three visits.

Sometimes RCT isn't sufficient to allay the problem, and the prime alternative is a dental implant.

Some reasons a RCT will not work include too much biting force on the tooth, a tooth that's structurally weak, and poor dental hygiene that makes continuing decay likely.

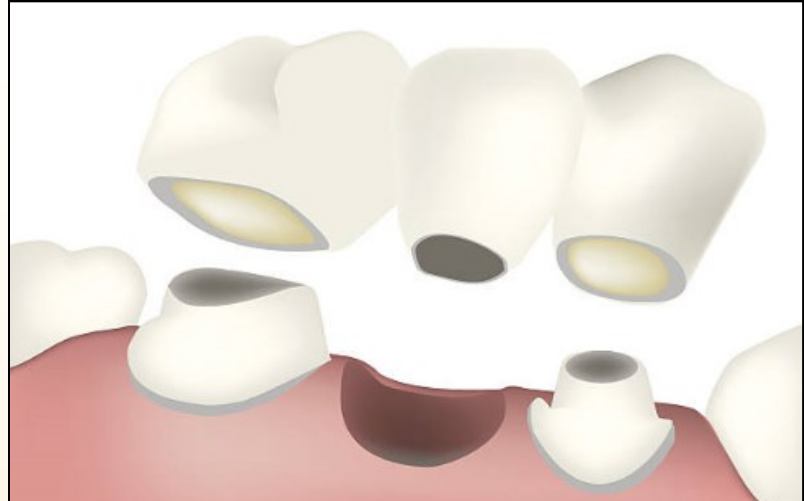
If the patient has sufficient bone structure to support an implant, we'll begin by extracting the affected tooth, and then replace it with a titanium post topped with a crown. This process takes about five visits to our office.

Another alternative to root canal therapy is a bridge, which is essentially a crown on each adjacent tooth with a fake tooth in between to replace the missing tooth. This typically requires two visits. Bridges are also available in implant form.

A major consideration when choosing between these three options is cost.

RCT for an anterior (front) tooth is \$450, and a posterior (back) tooth such as a molar is \$800.

A crown costs an additional \$725, and there may be an additional \$150 charge for filling



A bridge connects to two real teeth and replaces one or more missing teeth in between.

the tooth. Most insurance policies cover these costs.

An implant costs \$2,700. This covers everything in the procedure, including a CT scan and crown. Most dental insurance providers partially cover implant procedures.

A bridge costs \$750, multiplied by the number of teeth involved (so for example, two adjacent teeth and one

missing tooth would be \$750 x 3). This is also commonly covered by insurance companies.

As with any healthcare decision, there are multiple factors to consider, but we can help you find the best possible treatment to fit your schedule and budget.

If you think you may require one of these procedures, schedule an exam by calling us at (760) 810-7297.

NEW PATIENT SPECIAL

Full exam, full mouth X-rays and regular cleaning

\$75

(a \$296 value)