

Root canal treatment of immature teeth

Children's dental care
at St Thomas' Hospital

When a new tooth erupts into your child's mouth, the root continues to develop under the gum for about 3 years.

If the nerve and blood supply to the tooth get disrupted during this time, the growth of the root stops and an infection can happen.

The most common reason for a tooth to stop growing is a knock on the tooth that:

- moves or loosens it
- breaks it or knocks it out

Root canal treatment

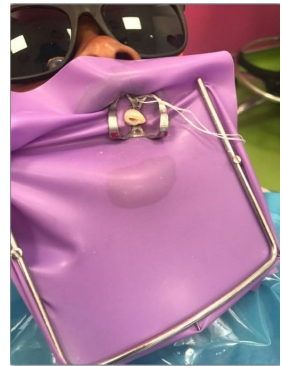
This involves clearing out the infected nerve and blood supply from inside the tooth and filling it. This is done to try to save the tooth for as long as possible.

When your child's treatment is complete, we'll discharge them back to their local dentist.

This treatment can be a long process taking several long appointments. Your child will probably need to have a local anaesthetic so that we can do this work.

They'll have a thin rubber sheet (dam) to cover the rest of their mouth so that the treatment area stays clean and dry while we work.

We'll need to take several X-rays during the treatment.



A rubber dam



A dental X-ray

Risks of root canal treatment

Having this treatment is very common and there should be no complications. However, some of the risks are:

- pain during and after treatment
- infection or swelling
- discolouration of the tooth
- brittleness – a mouthguard is recommended for contact sports
- the tooth might need to be removed
- the root canal treatment might need to be repeated
- the fillings in the tooth might need replacing
- perforation of the tooth during treatment
- instruments can break inside the tooth
- filling material or sterilising fluid can leak into the soft tissues, causing pain and swelling

After root canal treatment

Your child should expect some discomfort or mild pain on the day they're treated, and sometimes 1 or 2 days longer. This can usually be treated with regular painkillers that you can buy from a pharmacy or shop. Always follow the instructions, and never take more than the correct amount (dose).

You should contact us if your child has:

- pain that lasts longer than 24 hours
- swelling
- boils on their gums
- a persistent bad taste in their mouth
- a filling comes out of the treated tooth
- the treated tooth gets knocked or broken

When treatment is complete and the tooth has settled down, you might want to improve the appearance of the teeth by:

- replacing the filling on the tooth
- orthodontics (you'll need to let your child's orthodontist know that the tooth has had root canal treatment)
- whitening (this is illegal until your child is 18 years old)

Contact us

If you have any questions about your child's root canal treatment at our hospitals, please contact us, **phone** 020 7188 8006, option 4 then option 5

For more information about conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline, **phone** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm



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