

What to do for non-healing after Endodontic Treatment (Root Canal Treatment)

Fortunately for everyone, most root canals heal with about a 95% success rate. When they don't heal, we call this "non-healing". Be aware that this is not mere carpentry – it is a medical procedure and all medical procedures do not heal 100% of the time; including root canals. Generally speaking, the non-healing take one of two avenues.

- 1) Pain (mild to severe) with or without swelling or
- 2) No symptoms at all, but rather a change on the x-ray suggestive of non-healing (i.e. bone dissolving around the root tips).

Typically the non-healing is caused by one of two things:

- 1) Inflammation: The inflammation may be from the tooth being inflamed prior to treatment, or the treatment itself may elicit more inflammation. Usually time and medication like Advil or steroids can resolve this.
- 2) Infection: Infection can be from three main causes. *The original infection persists. *There is a crack in the tooth. *There is leakage through the top of the tooth that re-infected the root canal filling.

If the non-healing is due to infection, usually time and antibiotics will resolve the problem. If signs or symptoms persist, there are three options.

- 1) Re-treat the root canal
- 2) Surgically clean the bone that surrounds the root tip and seal the tip of the root
- or 3) Extract the tooth

Obviously, every case is different and careful evaluation is paramount to resolving any condition of non-healing. If any of the above procedures needs to be performed, you will be included in the decision making process.

If you have any questions, or should difficulties arise as a consequence of your root canal treatment, please contact the office.