



Exclusively for Dental Health Services Enrollees

TOOTH TIPS!

Alternatives to a Root Canal

What Is a Root Canal?

A procedure that removes infected or inflamed tooth pulp—lifesaving for tooth preservation when symptoms like sensitivity, pain, or swelling occur.

Alternatives to a Root Canal

Pulpotomy

- Involves removing only diseased pulp, leaving the root and nerve intact.
- Treated with materials like MTA or ferric sulfate, followed by a crown.
- Best for exposed healthy pulp, mild infections, or reversible pulpitis—especially in primary or immature permanent teeth.

Pulp Capping

- Indirect: Seals pulp that's at risk but not yet exposed.
- Direct: Applies a protective material (e.g., MTA or calcium hydroxide) directly to small, exposed areas to promote healing. Suitable for mild cases without inflammation, in both baby and adult teeth.

Tooth Extraction

- Removes the tooth entirely when salvage isn't feasible.
- Replacement options include implants, bridges, or dentures, though it can cost more than a root canal.

Apicoectomy (Root-End Surgery)

- Surgical removal of the root tip and surrounding infection, typically used when a previous root canal hasn't resolved the issue.

Endodontic Retreatment or Surgery

- Retreatment involves cleaning out and resealing canal contents under the crown, generally nonsurgical.
- Surgical intervention may be needed if canals are difficult to access or abnormally shaped.

Considerations

- Discuss options with a dental professional to avoid worsening decay, pain, or tooth loss.
- Root canals remain highly effective, with success rates between 82–92.6%.
- Side effects may include tenderness, swelling, or complications like infection, nerve issues, or tooth fracture/discoloration.

Source: *What Can You Do Instead of Getting a Root Canal?*, Health.com, Aug 8, 2025 [Health](#)

