



Pulpectomy

*Helping you understand your procedure
and the consent form*

► **Please read this
handout before
reading and signing
the consent form.**

This handout explains the pulpectomy procedure, which is the start of a root canal. Included are risks, benefits, and alternatives. This handout is in addition to the discussions you have with your doctors. It is important that you understand this information, so please read this handout thoroughly.

About the Procedure

A *pulpectomy* involves the removal of a diseased nerve in a painful, infected, traumatized, or inflamed tooth.

This is only the first step of a root canal, and must be followed up in the near future by completing the root canal. Local anesthesia is used to numb the area where the procedure is done. You also may receive some type of additional sedation.

Benefits

You might receive the benefits listed below from this procedure. The general chance of having these results happen is about 90%. Doctors cannot guarantee that you will receive any of these benefits. Only you can decide if the benefits are worth the risks. Benefits may include:

- Saving a diseased or traumatized tooth.
- Decreasing or eliminating pain.
- Eliminating the source or potential source of an infection.

What are the possible risks and complications from this procedure?

Before you have this procedure, you need to understand the associated risks. No procedure is completely risk-free. These risks are well-recognized, but there may also be risks not included in this list that are unforeseen by your doctors. Risks may include:

- General risks, which apply to all types of surgery and to procedures where a blood vessel, body cavity, or other internal tissue is entered with a needle, tube, or similar device. Such procedures are called *invasive* procedures. These risks, which can be serious and even life-threatening, include bleeding, infection, and damage to surrounding tissues, vessels, nerves, or organs.

Risks specific to this procedure include:

- Inability to eliminate infection, allowing it to become worse and possibly life-threatening.

Questions?

Call 206-598-4277

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Dental Clinic:
206-598-4277

- Inability to completely remove the diseased nerve.
- Perforation of the tooth with our instruments.
- Breakage of an instrument inside the tooth.
- Fracture of the tooth.
- Loss of the tooth if it does not respond to treatment.
- Inability to completely numb the tooth enough to get the therapy done comfortably.
- The tooth will likely require a crown and internal structural rebuilding. These procedures are quite costly.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?

You may decide not to have this procedure. Besides doing nothing, the alternative treatments are:

- Extraction of the offending tooth. (To learn more, ask for our handout, *Removal of Teeth*.)
- Taking antibiotics or anti-inflammatory medicines. Note that doing this without the pulpectomy may not be enough.
- Taking medicines to calm a traumatized nerve, which may or may not succeed.
- Using local anesthesia only until more treatment can be done.

There are risks and benefits to these treatment alternatives. Please discuss the details with your doctor, but these risks include:

- Inability to control the disease process.
- Inability to make you comfortable.

What follow-up care is needed?

It is critical that we check to make sure your infection goes away. Be sure to:

- Have the root canal finished within a few weeks, or you will risk having pain and/or infection.
- Take any antibiotic as prescribed. Use it all up, even if you feel like the infection is gone.
- Call us if your symptoms get worse.

If you have any more questions about this procedure or the risks, benefits, or alternatives to this procedure, ask your doctor before signing any consent forms.

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