

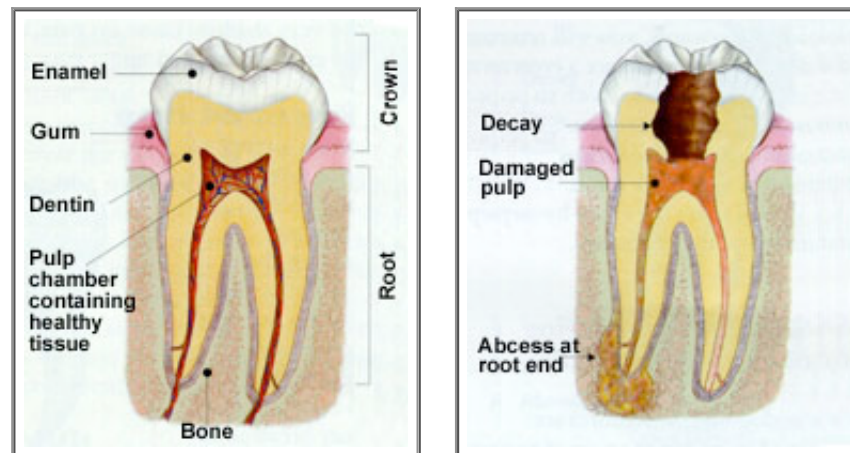
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## What is endodontics?

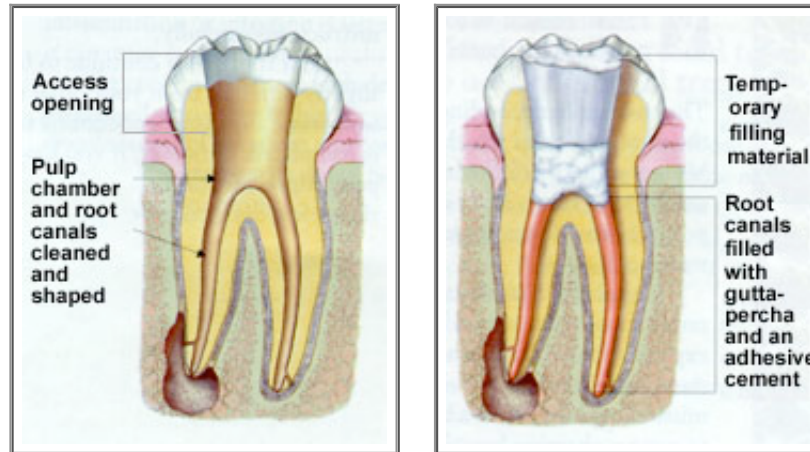


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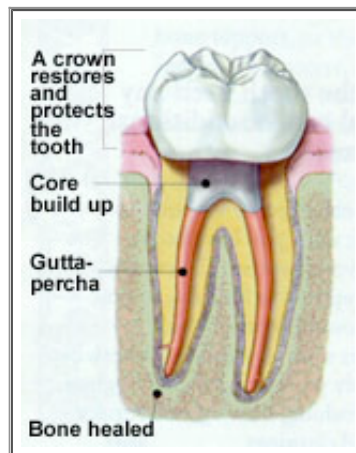
Endo (**within**) dontics (**teeth**) is the treatment or removal of the soft tissue in the **center** of the tooth. The tooth has three layers: the outer enamel, the middle layer of dentin, and the central pulp tissue. The pulp, commonly referred to as the "nerve," is composed mostly of small blood vessels and fibers, the primary purpose of which is to form the tooth. Once the tooth is fully formed, the pulp is no longer necessary.



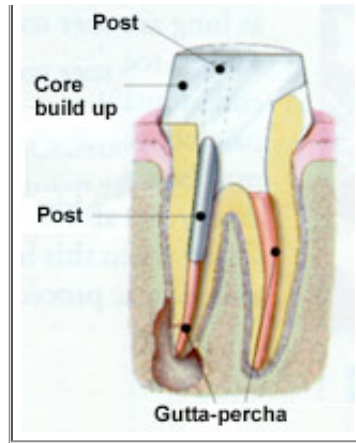
A tooth requires endodontic treatment when its pulp becomes swollen (inflamed) or infected. Causes of inflammation or infection are decay, cracks, a sudden blow or trauma and the need for multiple fillings in a tooth. An abscess often forms at the end of the root because of the damaged pulp tissue.



During root canal treatment, the dentist or endodontist carefully removes the inflamed or infected pulp tissue with specially designed instruments, cleanses the canals, and then fills them with a material called gutta percha and a medicinal sealer. This is analogous to cleaning out a wound and placing a bandage. The procedure may take one or two appointments, depending upon the condition of the tooth.



After treatment, the general dentist will place a filling or crown to protect the tooth, if necessary.



When the tooth has inadequate structure above the gum line to support a crown, the dentist may need to place a metal or composite post and a core build up.



[ [To Opening Page](#) ]