

Distribution Information

AAE members may reprint this position statement for distribution to patients or referring dentists.

About This Document

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Tooth Saving Tips

AAE Fact Sheet

Patients today have more options than ever before to treat their teeth. Understanding your choices and their impact on your future dental health and lifestyle is important. Read on to learn why nothing is as good as your natural tooth and get simple tips for saving your teeth!

Saving a natural tooth through endodontic treatment should always be the first choice for the best health and cosmetic results. There are many advantages to saving your natural tooth:

- efficient chewing
- normal biting force, so you can continue to eat your favorite foods
- maintains a natural appearance
- limits the need for more costly, ongoing dental work

Tips for Saving Your Teeth

1. If you are given a choice between root canal treatment or tooth extraction, always choose root canal treatment. Dentistry has yet to produce a denture, bridge or implant that looks, feels and functions as well as a natural tooth.
2. If your dentist recommends tooth extraction, ask whether root canal treatment is an option.
3. If your dentist says that an endodontic procedure is not an option, ask why, and request a referral to an endodontist. Endodontists are dentists who specialize in saving teeth, and have at least two years of advanced training in root canal procedures. They are experts at diagnosing and relieving tooth pain, and use advanced equipment to treat patients quickly and comfortably. Your dentist probably has partnerships with endodontists in your area already.

What to Avoid

Never choose extraction because you think it will be cheaper! When a natural tooth is extracted, it must be replaced with an artificial tooth to prevent other teeth from shifting, and to prevent future dental problems. The cost of a denture, bridge or implant, plus the extraction, often is higher than the cost of an endodontic procedure that would save the tooth for years to come. Most dental insurance plans cover endodontic treatment.

Never choose extraction because you think root canal treatment will be painful! Modern techniques and effective anesthesia make root canal treatment virtually painless. In fact, discomfort after the procedure is generally greater with a tooth extraction. Patients who have experienced root canal treatment are six times more likely to describe it as “painless” than patients who have not had a root canal.

Never choose extraction because you think it will be quicker! Endodontic treatments generally require one to two visits lasting less than an hour each. An extraction requires one visit, but the denture, bridge or implant will require several additional visits with your dentist.

To locate a root canal specialist near you, visit the American Association of Endodontists website at www.aae.org

The American Association of Endodontists is dedicated to the highest standard of patient care. For more information about saving your teeth or endodontic treatment, contact us!

American Association of Endodontists

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