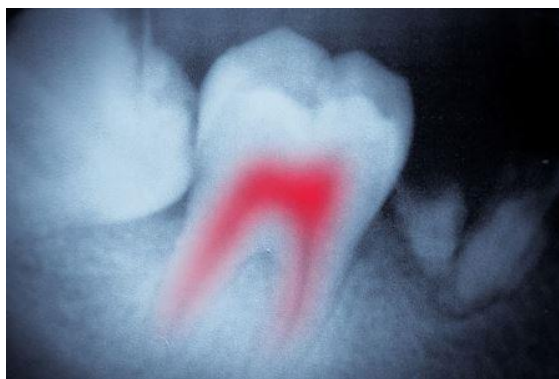


## Greg Tarantola DDS

### Components Of The Holistic Approach To Dentistry

#### Root Canals



Roots canals are a controversial topic. A root canal is planned if the tooth is irreversibly inflamed or actually infected. That is the living pulp has died and become necrotic. The ADA says they are OK, they help patients save their teeth. However studies by Dr. Weston Price and Dr. Hal Huggins (see an article [HERE](#)) say otherwise. Critics say that Price's studies were from 1910 and is not relevant anymore. I looked on PubMed to see if there were articles showing problems with root canals. Of the scores of titles I looked at, none studied that. They were mainly about procedures and techniques. A study in 2018 did show a connection with systemic diseases (see it [HERE](#)). The concern is that the millions of microscopic dentinal tubules that traverse from the main canal laterally to the external surface of the roots. They cannot be disinfected and sealed so they can harbor bacteria and other pathologic organisms.

And the roots can have cracks that cannot be seen on x-rays. A 3-D xray – called a cone beam cat scan (CBCT) - can be done which may allow the dentist to see cracks that are otherwise not seen. But even the CBCT can not locate microscopic cracks and just like the dentinal tubules, those microcracks can harbor bacteria etc.

The bottom line is, I would rather someone not get a root canal...but it is not as easy as that because every patient and every situation is different. To say you should never get a root canal is like saying a pregnant woman should never get a C-section. Sure, she'd rather not but sometimes it is decided by

all involved that it is necessary. Or to say every root canaled tooth should be removed is like saying every appendix or tonsil or wisdom tooth should be removed.,,,IT DEPENDS!

One thing I converse with patients about is their overall health and immune system. Think about it, our bodies are facing attacks every day by viruses, bacteria, fungi, environmental toxins etc., just like from a root canalled or dead tooth. And many people have no bad effects...why, because they are healthy and have a strong immune system. Maybe that person is at less risk with a root canal. However if a patient has a compromised immune system or has undiagnosed medical problems that no one can solve, that's a different story. I would be more concerned about that patient having a root canal done. However in a medically or immune-compromised patient, that is not for me to decide. I ask them to be examined by an Integrative Medicine physician and then the 3 of us work together as a team to decide what is best for this particular patient. These are important health impacting decisions and all parameters need to be considered.

Also in deciding on a root canal or not, it also depends on which tooth it is. If it is a second molar (the last molars in front of wisdom teeth), they are not critically important teeth (I call them "luxury teeth!"). There are many patients who are missing second molars but have never really "missed" them, that is for chewing etc. A first molar is another story as it is a more important tooth for chewing and for the stability of the bite.

A tooth in the smile zone is a different story also. If it is extracted, now the patient is faced with replacing that tooth. There are several options for replacing teeth, but you're talking a rather big dental project. So looking at all these factors, it may be decided to do the root canal. If that is the case, I will work with the endodontic specialist that uses a biocompatible bioceramic root canal filling material called Endosequence made of calcium silicates, calcium phosphate monobasic, zirconium oxide, tantalum oxide and thickening agents. BC Sealer is alkaline (+12pH) making it highly antibacterial. It does not expand/contract so it seals better. A recent study showed that BC Sealer killed *Enterococcus faecalis* within 2 minutes of contact. An Integrative Medicine physician I have worked with was OK with this material, after researching it.

It may be decided to extract a root canaled tooth. Sometimes there are multiple teeth which will obviously a more complicated process. And

replacing those teeth becomes a bigger process too. I can say that most teeth I extract are root canal teeth that have become problematic. So it is important to follow a biologically correct protocol when extracting all teeth, not just root-canal teeth— see our process [HERE](#).

So what's the moral of the story? The biggest takeaway is to do everything you can to avoid ever needing a root canal. Follow the suggested daily oral health care routine and natural remineralization and supplement products. When you do need dentistry, make sure it **REALLY** needs to be done (is it really a **PROBLEM** or is it just an **OBSERVATION**). An observation can be monitored over time with photographs and x-rays. And if it really is a **PROBLEM** make sure the solution/treatment/restoration is the most conservative possible. If you feel it is **NOT**, get another opinion – it's your mouth and your health.