

# ROOT CANAL

**Q:**  
I've undergone two root canal treatments in a year which were really painful. My infections were really bad then, which made me wonder as I've always brushed my teeth diligently twice a day. What has gone wrong? Under what situations would root canal treatments be necessary? Could it be genetic?

**A:**  
First, here are factors other than oral hygiene that can affect the health of your teeth:

- **Genetics:** Some people are more genetically predisposed to caries or have thin enamel. Or you might have a very acidic saliva; dry mouth when you don't have enough saliva in your mouth. As for dry mouth, your dentist may be able to help by prescribing you medication to help increase your salivary flow.
- **Oral hygiene:** You may not be brushing/flossing properly and adequately. Use a fluoride mouthwash as cavities are more likely to be between teeth and bacteria can hide anywhere - you may be unable to reach these tough spots with a toothbrush or floss.
- **Diet:** Eating or drinking acidic foods (such as soda) can break down your teeth's outer shell (known as the enamel), weakening the tooth due to fermentable carbohydrates and acidic foods present. If you eat sugar a lot, you are feeding the bacteria exactly what it wants to eat - producing more cavity-causing acid which makes your teeth more prone to decay. You can still enjoy your food, but make it a habit to rinse your mouth after every intake of carbohydrates and acid foods to reduce the risk of cavities!
- **Lack of Fluoride:** Fluoride makes the enamel of your teeth stronger. You can get it by using a fluoride toothpaste and mouthwash.
- **Health issues** (diabetes, auto immune



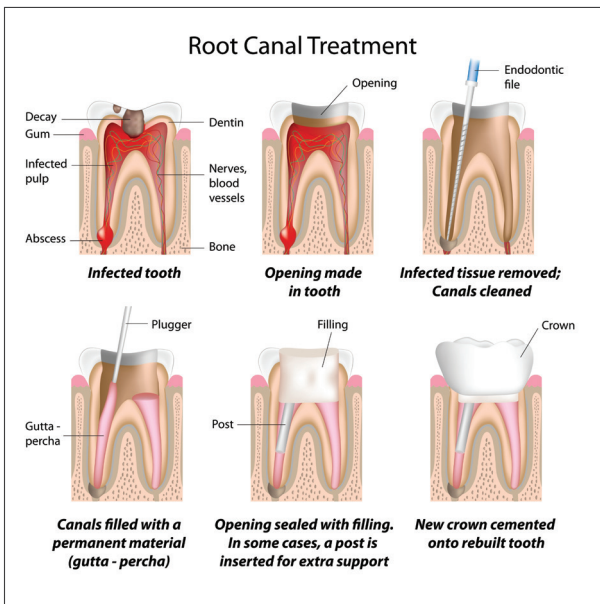
Dr Raymond Lim has been at the forefront of patient-centric dental care services and professional expertise since 2005. The National University of Singapore (NUS) alumnus who received a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (B.D.S) has advanced his professional career with three years at National Dental Centre treating trauma and emergency patients and a two-year post at polyclinics as the overall in charge. His subsequent years in private practice have further spurred his passion in implantology; he was awarded Aesthetic Implant Dentistry from the University of Uclan (UK) in 2011.

Founding B9 Dental Centre in 2013, Dr Raymond has seen early success with its current group of three dental centres within the first year. Lauded for their comprehensive expertise and trusted service, B9 Dental Centre was awarded with Top 10 Special Achievement in Dental Care Awards by Promising SME 500 2014.

**B9 Clementi**  
449 Clementi Ave 3  
#01-261 Singapore  
120449 (Next to Clementi MRT)  
Tel: 6777 8988

**B9 The Star Vista**  
1 Vista Exchange Green  
#01-02 Singapore 138617  
(Next to Buona Vista MRT)  
Tel: 6334 8988

**B9 Toa Payoh**  
520 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh  
#01-64 Singapore 310520  
(Next to Toa Payoh MRT)  
Tel: 6251 8988



- Prolonged sensitivity/pain to hot or cold temperatures after the heat or cold has been removed.
- Darkening of the tooth (Tooth's colour change to dark yellow, grey or black tint). This is common with teeth that have undergone trauma, such as teeth injured during a fall - pain and swelling may not be immediate, and changes in colours may even only take place after some years.
- Swelling and tenderness in nearby gums
- A persistent or recurring pimple on the gums

deficiencies) or Chemotherapy and Radiation Treatment: Chemotherapy or radiation treatments in the head& neck region may reduce salivary flow and cause other oral problems, increasing the risk of getting a cavity. A regular visit to the dentist is necessary to ensure all cavities are detected before it is too late.

- **Clenching and Grinding** may lead to cavities, due to the pressure placed on the teeth, which eventually cause cracks and fracture your teeth, speeding up tooth decay.
- Signs you may require a root canal treatment (Endodontic Treatment):
- Severe toothache pain upon chewing

Sometimes no symptoms are present and a routine X-ray evaluation may show a dark spot at the tip of the tooth's root, which indicates changes due to response to the infection within the tooth.

Root canal treatment relieves discomfort, prevents the risk, or removes a source of infection, allowing the tooth to be retained instead of being extracted- always the best solution from a dental perspective. It can be a comfortable experience (once known for being painful) with advance dental practice today. It is best to visit your dentist for advice to see if you require a root canal treatment. **PRIME**