WARNING: This eBook is for your personal use only. You may NOT Give Away, Share Or Resell This Intellectual Property In Any Way

All Rights Reserved

Copyright 2010. All rights are reserved. You may not distribute this report in any way. You may not sell it, or reprint any part of it without written consent from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

Limits of Liability
The author of this book and the accompanying materials has used his best efforts in preparing this book. The author and publisher shall in no event be held liable for any loss or other damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages. This book contains material protected under International and Federal Copyright Laws and Treaties. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited.
Table of Contents

Table of Contents…………………………………………………………… 3

About the Author…………………………………………………………… 5

Introduction ..................................................................................... 7
   Over 17 million teeth a year are saved with a root canal!............ 7
   My patients are just like you....................................................... 8
   Root canals are NOT fun!......................................................... 9
   Some folks will tell you, “Just pull it!”.................................... 9
   These 7 tips will help YOU...................................................... 9

Tip #1: Be Nice! ............................................................................. 10
   Why is this important?............................................................ 10
   An “attitude of nice”.............................................................. 10
   Three words you should NEVER say to your dentist............. 10
   Avoid “negative speak”.......................................................... 11
   Your stress and tension are contagious............................... 11
   The dental assistant is your friend and ally............................ 11
   Befriend him who holds the sharp instruments!................... 11
   Nice might = $$$ .................................................................... 12

Tip #2: You Can Help Yourself! What You Can Do BEFORE Your
Appointment .................................................................................. 12
   Be helpful ............................................................................. 12
   Get your ducks in a row.......................................................... 13
   Request an evaluation first..................................................... 13
   Write down all questions you have BEFORE you even go to your first
   appointment........................................................................... 14
   Make a list of all your diseases and medications..................... 14
   Write down details of the dental problem you are having........ 15
   Figuring out how to pay for this............................................. 15
   Use the Internet! ................................................................... 16
   What not to wear! ................................................................. 16
   What not to eat! ..................................................................... 17
   Premedicating can help........................................................ 17
Heart and joint premedication ........................................ 17
Sedative premedication .................................................. 18
Anti-inflammatory premedication ....................................... 18

Tip #3: You Can Help Yourself! What You Can Do on THE DAY OF Your Appointment ........................................... 19
  Brush your teeth before you go to your appointment .......... 19
  Don’t wear heavy perfume or cologne ............................. 19
  To be early is to be on time ........................................ 20
  Smile! ........................................................................ 20
  Expect to have to pay something – bring payment ............. 21
  Fill out all forms COMPLETELY ................................... 21
  Describe your problem in detail .................................... 21
  Patience is a virtue .................................................... 21
  Talk to the dentist ..................................................... 22

Tip #4: You Can Help Yourself Get Numb! .......................... 23
  Root canals should not hurt! ........................................ 23
  Remain CALM .......................................................... 24
  Bad infection? Bad swelling? ........................................ 25
  “My dentist always has trouble getting me numb.” .......... 25
  How about trying a 5,000 year old technique? ................. 25
  Test the tooth before starting ...................................... 26
  “Why does my heart beat fast after a shot?” ................... 26

Tip #5: Use Your Senses .................................................. 27
  Dental smells – Yuck! ................................................ 27
  Dental sights and sounds ............................................ 28
  Dental sights ............................................................ 28
  Dental sounds ............................................................ 29
  Touch ........................................................................ 30
  Dental tastes – Yuck! ................................................ 30

Tip #6: Find a KIND Office ............................................. 31
  First impressions ....................................................... 31
  “Dental ambience” .................................................... 32
  Observe the staff ....................................................... 32
  The dentist is the leader of the office ............................. 32
  Look for an after-hours “Lifeline” ................................ 33
  “What if I don’t like the office?” ................................. 33
Tip #7: Money! ................................................................. 34

Root canal = investment?! ............................................. 34
Your teeth are part of your body! ............................. 34
“Yeah, but I can always get a replacement tooth.” ....... 34
Why is it so expensive? .................................................. 35
Talk about the cost in advance .................................... 35
The cost of pulling it can be greater than the cost of the root canal! .......................................................... 36
Dental insurance .......................................................... 38
You have options to help you pay ............................ 39
1. Dental insurance..................................................... 39
2. If you do not have dental insurance....................... 39
3. Credit/debit cards .................................................. 39
4. Payment plans ....................................................... 39
5. Autodrafts ............................................................ 39

Git ‘er Done! ................................................................. 40

No fake tooth! ............................................................ 40
No more toothache! ................................................... 40
Take a “SIU” pill! ......................................................... 40
Some final thoughts ................................................... 41

Bonus Report – How to Prevent Gagging at the Dentist .......... 42

Introduction ............................................................. 42
What is gagging? ......................................................... 42
Tips and tricks to prevent gagging ............................. 43
YOU CAN DO IT! ......................................................... 44

About the Author

Dr. Rick Morgan

Please let me give you a little of my background so you have an idea where I have been. No, I am not one of those dentists who have never had a filling, let alone a root canal!

Growing up, going to the dentist was a luxury in my family of nine. Sweets were readily available, and tooth pain and problems were pretty common. So, my teeth suffered.
Consequently, I have been through it all. Fillings, getting teeth pulled, braces, crowns, gum surgery, jaw surgery, and yes, root canals! So, I know personally of what I speak.

**And, I am still a dental wimp!**

So, I can certainly empathize with you. I understand what patients are going through.

In high school, I worked for my local general dentist in my small town of 1500 people. I really enjoyed watching the office “work”, even though I was just the cleanup and errand boy for them.

I set aside that experience, and I attended the U.S. Naval Academy. I graduated and proudly served my country as a Naval Aviator for five years. I got out of the Navy to pursue my dental interest that was sparked by the job I had had in high school.

I graduated from dental school in 1985, so I have been a dentist for a long time!

I decided to further serve my country as a general dentist in the U.S. Air Force. Four years later, I went to specialty training. After two additional years of intensive training to learn to do root canals, I became an endodontist – officially a “root canal specialist”. And, I am a proud member of the official organization for endodontists, the American Association of Endodontists.

After the Air Force, I went into private practice, and I have been in my wonderful practice for 16 years. I limit my practice to just doing root canals – people think I am crazy!

People ask me all the time, “How can you do this to people all day long?” “What made you want to do root canals, of all things?” And, this is what I always say:

> “I love getting you out of pain and helping you save your teeth.”

So, for 16 years as a root canal specialist, I have been doing just that and loving it!

I married the woman of my dreams under the swords at the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel, and by the grace of God, I have been married to her for 35 years. I am the very proud dad of a beautiful daughter who is a soloist at New York City Ballet.

I enjoy writing, traveling with my lovely wife, and watching my gorgeous, graceful daughter perform.

**DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to my wife and daughter who so patiently helped and encouraged me with their love and understanding.

And

To my wonderful staff who have contributed their thoughts and ideas to this project, and
who encourage me daily.

And

To Dr. William Beall who first introduced me to the business of dentistry “allowing” me to clean his office and empty the trash during my high school years! It was his influence that led me down the wonderful path of dentistry.

Email:  DrRickMorgan@rootcanalsurvival.com

World Wide Web:  http://www.rootcanalsurvival.com

Telephone:  1-251-342-3433
Fax:  1-251-342-3515

Mail:  Rick Morgan, DMD
       508 Georgian Drive
       Mobile, AL  36609

Introduction

Okay, here’s the deal - your dentist has told you, “You need a root canal.” Aghhh!! Well, join the crowd! You are not the only one out there who has heard those words.

Over 17 million teeth a year are saved with a root canal!

Always remember, if 17 million people can survive a root canal, so can you!!

I have put together a list of “Tips” in this ebook that will not only help you survive that root canal, but also help make it a breeze.

I have a passion for root canals. Weird, I know. But, simply put, I love getting people out of pain and helping them save their teeth. That is a hugely satisfying job.

I have patients who come in crying, who have been up all night hurting, and when they leave (after getting a root canal), they are hugging me and thanking me profusely. You, too, can have that same experience. This book will reveal tips that will insure you do!

In my wonderful office, my staff and I sat down at a staff meeting years ago and brainstormed what it is we really do and how we want to do it. We came up with “Our Purpose”, which is displayed prominently in every room and says exactly what I just told you about my passion for
Our purpose is to help our patients save their teeth and to get them out of pain. We will provide this valuable service in a friendly, compassionate, and knowledgeable way!

In this ebook, I will give you easy ways to survive your root canal. I will not use fancy words, technical junk, or big, fat lies. I am a “regular kinda guy” who really wants to help you.

Every tip will help YOU!

This book is not written for the dentist. It is for YOU! I truly want your root canal experience to be as comfortable and as easy as possible.

I know that sounds like an oxymoron - “Root canals” and “comfortable and easy”!? 

Very Important NOTE: I will guarantee you, if you follow these easy tips, you can help yourself and dramatically increase the chances of successfully surviving your root canal.

Now, you may be thinking, who is this guy making these claims? I am a dentist who is also a dental wimp! I am a specialist in endodontics, which means all I do all day long is ROOT CANALS! I have a great practice with a wonderful, loving staff.

My patients are just like you…

We see patients, just like you, come in:

- Scared to death
- Crying
- Very worried
- Very nervous

My experience has shown that they really want to save their teeth, but they are usually worried about several things, such as:

1. Pain
2. Not knowing anything about what’s going to happen – “fear of the unknown”
3. How to pay for it, etc.

This book will help you with these and much more.

Thank you so very much for taking your valuable time to read my ebook. I know it will help
you, and I am proud of you for wanting to save your teeth!

**Root canals are NOT fun!**

…but, neither is a toothache or losing your teeth. The seven tips I reveal in this book will truly help you “get through” your root canal with ease.

Maybe you just need a crutch to help you GO for your root canal: read this before you go! In it you will find tips on what to say, do, ask for, etc.

Use these tips. Read the entire book. Make copies of these tips and keep them handy for yourself or your friends and relatives who may be dreading their root canal.

Who says losing your teeth is “bound to happen” or is inevitable? Absolutely not true! A root canal saves your teeth, and you CAN survive it!

**Some folks will tell you, “Just pull it!”**

The problem with that theory is that you will never get another one! Oh, you can “just get an implant” to replace it.

But, always remember, an implant IS NOT your real tooth. Implants are excellent choices for replacing teeth that CANNOT be saved. But, when it can be saved, and when it is restored properly, your natural tooth will always be a better choice.

I frequently refer patients to have teeth extracted when they cannot be fixed. So, I am not saying these things just because I am an endodontist who makes a living doing root canals. I firmly believe this!

**These 7 tips will help YOU…**

This book is a simple read, but it has valuable information for you. All of the tips I have included in this book are simple, straightforward, and very helpful to you. Some will sound very simplistic, and maybe even goofy. Do them anyway!

I have written this book to help you make the decision to GO for the root canal. And, if you follow these tips, you will have the confidence knowing you CAN survive it!

If you read this book and follow my tips, I will guarantee it will help make your root canal experience easy to survive!
Tip #1: Be Nice!

Why is this important?

Being nice…why does this matter? What does being nice have to do with root canal survival? Great questions. I will show you. I know this may be trivial and common sense, but, too often these days, common courtesy is a forgotten trait.

It seems that “being nice to one another” is no longer considered a necessity in our day-to-day experiences.

But, when it comes to surviving a root canal, being nice is probably the absolute MOST IMPORTANT “TIP” I can share with you.

An “attitude of nice”

Being nice whenever you are in contact with your dental office always makes your experience easier – for you AND for the entire office staff. If you display an attitude of nice, the entire procedure will not only be easier, but faster as well.

Why do I say this? Because others in that dental office will readily empathize with you. They will instantly be more understanding and display a heartfelt concern for your well-being. But, be careful…the opposite is true, as well.

Three words you should NEVER say to your dentist!

I will periodically relate a few true stories that happened in my office to help you – and to show you what to do and what not to do. It is my hope that you will relate to these stories in a personal way to help you survive your root canal experience.

I had an unhappy patient one day, who greeted me with a scowl, and his first words to me were, “I hate dentists!”

Three words you should never say to your dentist!

Not a particularly nice greeting. Guess what? My impression of him was tainted from the get-go. It is hard to be nice to someone who greets you for the first time with those words.
Now, I am sure what he meant was “I hate going to the dentist.” He could not possibly have hated ME, since he had not ever even met me before! So, here’s a HINT: If you must share your hatred, say “I hate going to the dentist”, not “I hate dentists”.

**Avoid “negative speak”…**

Another patient came in our front door and greeted my friendly, front desk folks with these words: “I don’t want to be here. I can’t stand being here. I just hate this.” These were the FIRST words out of her mouth.

The tone was set for the staff even before they had a chance to say “Good morning!”

So, the first critical “TIP” is to go in for your root canal being NICE.

- I know you are going to be stressed, tense, and afraid of the uncertainty that you are facing.
- You will only make surviving your root canal experience even harder if you insist on being less than kind to those who are there to help you.

**Your stress and tension are contagious!**

Everyone you encounter will feel the same stress and tension. But also remember that being nice is also contagious.

Much better to have the folks taking care of you “catch your niceness” rather than your stress and tension!

**The dental assistant is your friend and ally**

Patients often feel more comfortable with the assistants than the dentist. Being nice to the dental assistant will increase the chances that they will be nicer to you!

And, believe me, when you are trying to get through a root canal, you need all the help you can get. The dental assistants will help you, especially when you are nice to them.

**Befriend him who holds the sharp instruments!**
Not only is the assistant’s perception of you important, but perhaps even more important is how the **dentist** perceives your attitude. This is REALLY important since he or she is the one who is holding all the sharp instruments!

But, seriously, you want your dentist to be gentle, empathetic and calm when he is doing your root canal. If you have been unfriendly, mean, or obnoxious to his staff or to him, he will have a much harder time being a sweet, nice kinda guy!

If you are nice to them, YOU will benefit greatly from the way they all treat you. It only makes sense that you do not create a tense situation that will make your dentist a bundle of nerves when he starts to work on you!

**Nice might = $$$**

Another potential benefit to a nice attitude is financial. Dentists who own their own practice have the freedom to charge fees as they deem appropriate. They also have the freedom to reduce their fees and even choose not to charge anything.

It is easier for a dentist to consider doing those things if a patient has been kind to her and her staff. **Think about it…**

From the initial phone call to the office, to your first greeting when entering the office, to your attitude toward your dental assistant and friend, to your words to the dentist…

**Remember, and practice TIP #1:**

**BE NICE!**

**Tip #2: You Can Help Yourself!**

**What You Can Do BEFORE Your Appointment**

To survive your root canal with ease, there are several things you can actually do for yourself, even before you leave your house for your first appointment.

**Be advised:** All of these suggestions I have either used myself or recommended their use to my patients. Why? Because they work!

**Be helpful**
Surviving your root canal is easier if you can get in and get out as quickly and as smoothly as possible. To help insure that that “flow” will happen (even before you go to your appointment), being helpful goes a long way.

We have folks that come in for their appointment totally unprepared, and therefore, unhelpful – no insurance card with them, no idea of the medicines they are taking, etc.

Immediately, your appointment is delayed (translation: you will be in the dental office longer!) until these things can be sorted out.

**Get your ducks in a row!**

Plan ahead in the days before your appointment, so you can be helpful to the folks who will be taking care of you. In other words, get your ducks in a row.

At a minimum, get the following items together to have ready to take with you on the day of your appointment:

- Your insurance card
- An ID of some sort
- A means to pay
- A list of your diseases and medications
- A list of questions you have about the treatment

Call the office and ask if there is anything else you need to bring. If you are proactive and helpful, your efforts will be appreciated all the more by the people who will be caring for you EVEN BEFORE you get to the office.

**Request an evaluation first**

To help alleviate your fears and apprehension, an excellent idea is to request an evaluation/consultation appointment before your actual root canal treatment appointment.

This helps you in a number of ways:

- It is a great way for you to become familiar with how to get to the office.
- It allows you to meet the office staff.
- It gives you a chance to meet face-to-face with the dentist who will be working on you.
Then, when you return for the treatment, a lot of the anxiety and fear is gone.

Some dentists like to evaluate and treat the patient at the same visit. I, too, have done that numerous times, especially if the patient is in a lot of pain.

But, most dental offices will appreciate and honor your request for an evaluation first. So, feel free to ask!

**Write down all questions you have BEFORE you even go to your first appointment**

I often cannot even remember what happened yesterday! So, if you have trouble remembering at times, why not **write down questions you have about your root canal**.

This does two very important things that will help you survive your root canal:

1. It shows the doctor and staff that you are very involved in your dental care, and
2. Since time is so critical both for the doctor and the patient, having your questions prepared ahead of time saves a tremendous amount of time.

I love it when a patient whips out her list of questions! It shows me she cares about her health and wants to be sure she remembers what she wanted to ask.

**High-tech tip:** Use your cell phone – write a note to yourself or send yourself the list of questions you have. Then, pull out your phone and bring up the questions while in the office.

That could save you writing down anything on a piece of paper that you might forget at home!

**Make a list of all your diseases and medications**

Dentists are concerned not only with your teeth, but with your overall health. Our dental treatment often involves the use of medicine and anesthetics that can affect your medical condition. We need to know what diseases you have and what medicines you take.

Trying to recall these details when you are sitting in a dental office, already apprehensive, can be a daunting task. **Write them down in advance.** Again, this will greatly reduce your time in the dental office.

**38 bottles of pills!**

True story – I once had a little elderly lady come into my office. She was carrying her purse and a brown grocery bag (well used). She sets the brown bag on the check-in counter, turns the bag upside down, and dumps out 38 pill bottles!
This was her “list of medications”. So, my wonderful staff sweetly lined up all the bottles and wrote out a list for her. We did get her medication list, but it meant she had to spend a lot more time in the office.

I recommend you make this list of your medications, as well as your diseases, BEFORE your appointment. Again, use your cell phone!

It is important to include on your medication list:

- The name of the drug;
- The dose you are taking;
- How often you take it; and
- What you condition you are taking it for.

**Write down details of the dental problem you are having**

This, too, will greatly speed up the entire appointment. Think of any details you can with respect to your symptoms. This is extremely helpful to the dentist.

Just jot down things such as:

1. What causes the pain – hot, cold, chewing?
2. What time of day is it worse?
3. Where do I feel pain?
4. How long has it been bothering you?
5. Any recent dental treatment?

**Figuring out how to pay for this!**

**The long-term benefits of saving your teeth are tremendous.** Dental treatment is an expensive service to provide for our patients. However, if you think long-term (as in “I want to keep all my teeth until I die!”), the expense is money well spent.

Before you even go for your appointment, discuss with the dental office staff the details of how you can pay for your root canal. Most offices will gladly tell you ahead of time so there are no surprises.

Remember, dental offices WANT to help you be able to pay for the treatment. Most dental offices have several payment options for you, such as credit cards, payment plans, etc. Armed with this information, you **CAN** figure a way to pay for your root canal.
Knowing about costs in advance makes the appointment less stressful, and therefore, easier to “survive”. I give a lot of “money” ideas for you to consider in Tip #7: Money.

Use the Internet!

If you are one who loves to get as much information as possible on a subject, then you can get a lot of information about root canals on the internet. Grab a search engine and type in “root canals”, and you will get more information than you may want.

For some, more is better. For others, too much information does have the potential to make you even more worried than you might have been. But, rest assured, there is a wealth of good information out there on root canal treatment!

Perhaps one of the most respected sites is the website for the American Association of Endodontists. It contains tons of information that can be helpful to you.

What not to wear!

“I’m freezing!” “Why do you have to keep it so cold in here!?”

I hear these comments a lot. I am sure you, too, have been cold in a doctor’s office. Being comfortable while at your appointment is critical for your survival.

Dental offices have to keep the temperature low for good reasons:

- The staff works very close to a lot of heat-generating equipment – computers, sterilizers, microscopes, etc.

- Also, in compliance with OSHA regulations, we often have to wear a lot of protective clothing – jackets, gloves, masks, and protective glasses.

So, we usually get quite warm while we are working! So, my tip for you is this: know what NOT to wear to your appointment.

A patient came in my office just last week wearing a tank top, cutoffs, and flip-flops. His first comment to me was “It’s freezing in here!” No duh!?

If you are usually cold when you go to the dentist, then don’t wear shorts, short skirts, sleeveless tops, and “bare” feet. Layering is a great idea, because you may find that you warm up quickly as the work starts.
And, don’t wear tight-fitting clothes that may be uncomfortable when lying in the dental chair. Wear layered, loose-fitting clothes, long-sleeves, and shoes that cover your toes! You will be happy you did.

“But, what if I am coming directly from work?”

I know that sometimes you cannot control what you are wearing because you come directly from work, etc. So, if you find yourself in a situation where the clothes you are wearing are not keeping you warm (as in you are FREEZING!), it is okay to ask the staff for a blanket to cover up with.

At the very least they can use the heavy, lead apron as a blanket. In my office, we have soft, warm blankets, and we ask every patient if they would like to use one.

Even if you are in the reception room, shivering, with your knees knocking and your lips turning blue, it is okay to nicely ask the front desk for a blanket. If they look at you like you have two heads, then this may not be the office for you.

We want you to be comfortable, and you will be better able to survive the “ordeal” if you are comfortable. So, be bold and ask for what you need!

What not to eat!

Just like “what not to wear”, what not to eat is very important. This will be a personal decision that will vary from person to person

Eat right – eat light! It is usually wise to eat a light meal about an hour or more before your appointment. (That does not mean 3 burritos and a side of nachos with LIGHT cream cheese!) A light meal can help you tolerate the anesthetics, medications, and laughing gas (if used).

Too little food may leave you light-headed, and too much food may make you feel sick. Help yourself survive your root canal – eat, but eat light.

Premedicating can help

Heart, joints, and anxiety. What do these have to do with surviving your root canal? Glad you asked!

Some conditions require you to take specific medicines before you get dental treatment. This is called premedicating.

- Heart and joint premedication
ALWAYS check with your physician to see if you need to take any antibiotics which protect you if you have certain heart or artificial joint conditions. This is only required in special circumstances.

Dental treatment can “stir up” bacteria in the mouth that may cause problems elsewhere in your body. So, it is important to check with your physician BEFORE your dental appointment to see if you need antibiotic premedication.

**Sedative premedication**

Premedicating can also help you if you are extremely nervous or anxious about going to the dentist. This can be a super way to calm your fears and anxiety.

There are sedatives the dentist can prescribe that do just that. An added benefit to being less anxious is it is easier for the dentist to get the tooth numb! So, don’t be afraid to ask for a prescription!

Also remember, since these sedatives are designed to relax you, they often make you very sleepy. Therefore, you will need to have someone drive you to and from your appointment.

**Anti-inflammatory premedication**

This is a great tip! This tip involves premedicating with anti-inflammatory medicines.

NOTE: If you are allergic to these types of medicines, or if you are taking other anti-inflammatory medicines, or even if you are allergic to aspirin, then you cannot use this tip.

Again, ALWAYS check with your physician before taking any new medicine.

I routinely recommend to my patients that they use an over-the-counter, anti-inflammatory medicine the day prior to their appointment and the day of their appointment.

For example, taking two, over-the-counter Ibuprofen at each meal and at bedtime for those two days helps reduce the inflammation around a painful tooth. This can do two things:

1. It can make anesthesia more effective, and

2. It can really help reduce any discomfort AFTER your root canal appointment.
So, the use of certain medications BEFORE your appointment can be a great help to your root canal survival.

Personally, I believe in planning ahead, ESPECIALLY if I know it will help reduce my pain, make me more comfortable, and save me time in the dental chair!

The tips I have outlined in this section will help you with all of these things. So, even before you leave your house, you really can help yourself survive your root canal.

Tip #3: You Can Help Yourself!

What You Can Do on THE DAY OF Your Appointment

I am of the opinion, when I go to the dentist, that to get in and get out as quickly as possible is a good thing!

If you follow these tips, you will greatly help yourself “flow” through the office much more quickly. The sooner you are out of that chair, the better, right?

Brush your teeth before you go to your appointment

This sounds really stupid, I know. But, having a clean mouth really sends a message to the dentist that you are serious about saving your teeth. It clearly says “I care about my teeth.”

Equally important, having clean teeth makes it easier for the dentist to evaluate and diagnose your problem.

If you did not have a chance to brush your teeth before arriving at your appointment, that’s okay. Feel free to nicely inform the staff of this.

Then, ask them if they have a toothbrush and toothpaste so you can brush before seeing the dentist. Believe me, everyone will appreciate you for asking!

Don’t wear heavy perfume or cologne

Now, I know some of you reading this will be thinking this is ridiculous. But, before you call me for a refund, hear me out.
Smells are huge! They are wonderful at the appropriate times. However, in the dental office, strong perfumes can be distracting. While you may think your choice of cologne is heavenly, others may think it is annoying.

It is difficult to please everyone every time. Strong perfumes also can be a trigger for some people to get headaches. And, no one wants their root canal doctor to have a headache!

So, deodorant – yes; heavy perfume and cologne – no.

To be early is to be on time

There is an old adage that says:

“To be early is to be on time; to be on time is to be late.”

I probably learned this while at the Naval Academy, where I was jolted out of bed by a screeching bell every morning for four years just to insure I would be on time! But, it is a truth that can actually help you better survive your root canal.

Arriving early for your appointment allows time for paperwork, insurance questions, etc.

We often have patients who come squealing into our parking lot on two wheels exactly at their appointment time. They rush into the office, practically out of breath, and usually they are stressed about having rushed just to make it “on time”!

Arriving early can help reduce your stress. Additionally, it can often help you get in and get out much more quickly. The less time you have to spend getting your root canal, the easier it is to survive it!

Smile!

Walk into the office with a smile. I know, I know, how can I expect you to walk into a root canal appointment with a smile?! I must be insane, right!

But, seriously, try to muster a smile when you greet the office staff. It is huge for them, and you will be treated with a much better attitude. Your smile instantly creates a friendly feeling among those folks.

The entire procedure starts off on a positive note. Being positive is a good thing when you are trying to survive your root canal.
Expect to have to pay something – bring payment

Root canals are expensive! But, so is the cost of losing a tooth and then replacing it. With a root canal, you are getting a valuable service that will usually allow you to keep your natural tooth for many years, and perhaps for your lifetime.

So, you should arrive at your appointment expecting to pay something for the services you receive. Even if it is “just” an evaluation and x-ray.

As I discussed previously, it is a very good idea to ask BEFORE your appointment exactly what your payment options will be. Then you can come prepared to pay. So, bring a credit card, check, or even cash to your appointment.

Fill out all forms COMPLETELY

Remember the written list of your diseases and medications that you prepared ahead of time at home? Pull it out and use it to fill out the stack of forms you will be given.

For your health and safety, it is critical that the dentist and staff have accurate and current information about your health status. Try not to abbreviate. If you need more room, ask for an additional form.

If you take the time to do this, the entire appointment goes more smoothly, and faster, too.

Describe your problem in detail

This is one of the most important things you can do to help insure you survive your root canal. Very often, a doctor can diagnose your problem by just listening to your description of your symptoms.

Don’t be afraid to pull out the written list you made at home. (You did bring your list, didn’t you?) The information you provide can greatly cut the time it takes the dentist to figure out what is the source of your pain and how to treat it.

Again, less time for you in the chair = greater survival rates!

Patience is a virtue

Dental offices, in general, and endodontist’s offices in particular, often have patients calling them with an emergency toothache. Dentists know that tooth pain is unlike any other pain. It can be debilitating.
Toothache pain is often compared to kidney stones and childbirth. And, it is often described as WORSE pain than either of those!

So, we will always try to get patients who are in pain into the office as quickly as possible.

We want to be compassionate, and we want to relieve their pain quickly. So, we will often tell our patients to come in right away, and we will “work them into” our schedule.

**Why is this important for you?** Well, for one thing, if you are the one who is in pain, you will greatly appreciate being seen quickly! But, also, it is important for you to remember that you are being “worked into” an already fully scheduled day.

You were not on the dentist’s schedule at the beginning of the day, so they will often have to make you wait while they take care of the scheduled patients. I really hate making people wait, but it sometimes cannot be helped. Be patient. Expect waits if you are being worked in.

When you are in bad pain, most dentists will see you immediately and try to relieve your pain on the spot, when possible. That way you can have some relief while we complete our work on the other patient(s) in the office.

But, the point is, being patient and being grateful for even being seen, are important. Patience is a virtue!

**Talk to the dentist**

Fear and anxiety about your root canal are very real feelings! You can help yourself by feeling free to talk to your dentist.

She truly wants to know three things:

- What is worrying you;
- What can she do to make you more comfortable, and
- What questions do you have?

If you are **AFRAID OF SHOTS** – tell the dentist BEFORE she starts to numb you.

If you have a history of **BEING HARD TO NUMB** – tell the dentist BEFORE she starts to numb you.

Why is this important to your survival of the root canal treatment? Because, there are lots of things we can do to help our patients through these problems. Some we’ve already discussed; some we will discuss.
The important thing is for you to tell your dentist these things!

Along those same lines, there are two types of patients:

1. Those who want to be told by the dentist what is going on during treatment. If this is you, let him know. We enjoy talking about our work.

   Many patients are comforted when they know what is going on in their mouth!

2. By the same token, there are patients who want to know NOTHING. If you are one of them, tell your dentist before he starts discussing all the details of what he is doing.

And, speaking of talking to your dentist, do not be afraid to ask for something during treatment, such as:

- If you want to hold the assistant’s hand during the shot, or
- If you need to use the restroom, or
- If you would like a blanket.

Your comfort is VITAL, not only to your surviving the treatment, but also to the dentist and staff whose job is easier when you are happy.

Following these tips on the day of your appointment will be a tremendous help to getting you through the treatment with no problems. Root canal survival is our goal for you!

Tip #4: You Can Help Yourself Get Numb!

This may be my favorite tip of all! Weird, I know, but I take a lot of pride in GETTING MY PATIENTS TOTALLY NUMB!

I have been in the dental chair myself when I wasn’t numb, and I will never do that to anyone! Believe it or not, there are several things YOU can do to help yourself get numb.

These are true whether you are getting a root canal or just regular dental treatment. Some of these tips actually will help you get numb, while others will help you be better able to “get through” the shot.

Root canals should NOT hurt!

That is a bold claim, but I truly believe it.
Toothaches hurt.

Shots can hurt

But, root canals should NOT hurt.

Why not? Because the tooth should be NUMB! And a numb tooth cannot feel pain!

Remember, the pain of the shot is for a very short time. But, achieving total numbness is the goal – and it makes surviving the root canal a breeze!

Remain CALM…

Anxiety works against your ability to get numb. But, you can do several things to calm yourself for treatment:

1. Take sedatives prior to treatment.

2. Ask to be given laughing gas (nitrous oxide and oxygen) during treatment (or at least during the shot).

3. Consider self-hypnosis. This may sound a little weird, I know. But, I have seen it work.

   I once watched a dentist friend treat a patient who came in, sat in the chair, and asked to be left alone for a few minutes to go into a self-hypnotic state so she would not need any shots!

   I would not have believed it if I had not seen it. She did not flinch one time during the treatment. She was either crazy or super tough! Maybe a little of both?!

   I don’t know if she was truly self-hypnotized, but it really didn’t matter! She had found a way to calm herself and help herself survive!

4. Another way to help you remain calm is a simple one: ask if you can hold the hand of the dental assistant during the shot.

   In my office, my super sweet assistants place a hand on the patient’s shoulder during the entire shot, often giving the patient a reassuring pat.

   That human touch means a great deal to people!
It not only helps you remain calm, but it also serves to distract you somewhat from what is going on. Both of these reduce your anxiety, increasing your chances for total numbness!

**Bad infection? Bad swelling?**

If you have a lot of swelling from a badly infected tooth, your dentist may prescribe antibiotics before he treats you. YOU may be able to help insure total numbness by actually requesting that (if they are indicated), and maybe requesting an anti-inflammatory medication, as well.

Often, if you take these medications for a period of time BEFORE treatment, the tooth will be easier to get numb. This is a decision your dentist can help you make.

Sometimes it is necessary to do the work in the presence of swelling and infection and then give antibiotics after treatment. But, often, reducing the swelling and infection can be of help with our anesthetics.

**“My dentist always has trouble getting me numb.”**

EVERYTIME you go to the dentist, this is one of those things you definitely want to tell him BEFORE he starts treatment.

Knowing that history, we can use different techniques when giving a shot. We can also use different types of anesthetics, or use 1 or 2 different types in combination.

Also, for patients with this history, we will often let our anesthesia sit a little longer than normal before ever starting the treatment. Since endodontists are specialists in treating the nerves inside teeth, we have to know several different techniques to get our patients totally numb!

One thing you can do is ask your dentist if they use **“intraosseous shots”**. This is a safe and effective technique that can be a super addition to regular shots.

This type of shot numbs the entire tooth, bone and gum areas, and it takes effect immediately. It is not necessary in all cases, but I use it routinely in my practice to help insure total numbness.

It cannot be used in all patients, so by all means ask your dentist first. If you or your dentist has any questions about this technique, please feel free to email me anytime.

**How about trying a 5,000 year old technique?**

This tip is one I have been given by some patients over the past 20(+) years I have been in practice. They swear by it. It is the use of *acupressure*.
This is similar to what we all have done to ourselves when we bang our arm against a counter. What is the first thing we do? We press hard right over the spot we hit!

That is a form of pressure anesthesia – or acupressure. Using acupressure during a shot is what some patients do to help them tolerate the pain of the injection.

There are several acupressure points throughout the body. But, the most common technique used by these patients is to use your thumb and forefinger on one hand to squeeze the soft tissues between the thumb and forefinger on the other hand.

Applying this pressure and holding it, especially during the shot, can be an effective use of acupressure for some patients. You can find a lot more information about this technique online. I am by no means an expert in this ancient technique. However, when it comes to helping relieve the discomfort of a shot, I am all for the patient doing whatever it takes!

Test the tooth before starting

One last thing you can do to help you overcome your fears of feeling pain during the root canal is to ask the dentist if they would please “test” the tooth to be sure it is numb before starting.

This is a very easy test. The dentist or the staff can simply touch the tooth with a cold piece of cotton. If you feel no sensation, this is usually a good indication you are numb!

If you feel ANYTHING, the dentist knows to add some more anesthesia before starting his treatment. A very comforting test for you – don’t be afraid to ask for it!

“Why does my heart beat fast after a shot?”

This really has no bearing on “getting numb”, but this is a concern for many patients, so I’d like to address it for you.

Some patients even think they are “allergic to the anesthesia” because their heart races. In reality, almost everyone’s heart rate is up when they are going to the dentist. That is just human nature.

But, there is a real reason for why your heart beats faster after a shot. Many anesthetics we use have a very small amount of epinephrine in them. This is the medication you see the TV doctors on “ER” injecting directly into patient’s hearts to stimulate the heart.

It is supposed to make your heart beat faster! In the dental setting, it is a tiny amount, and therefore, the heart only beats faster for a few minutes, and then returns to normal. It can be disconcerting, but a perfectly normal response.
Some ask, “Why do they even have epinephrine in the shot?” Good question! The primary reason is that it REALLY helps keep the anesthetic solution in the area, so the numbness doesn’t wear off so quickly.

And, when you are getting a root canal, that is a GOOD thing.

Since being totally numb and not feeling any pain during treatment are real concerns for our patients, anything you can do to improve your chances of getting numb is important.

If you use the tips in this chapter, you really CAN help yourself get numb!

Tip #5: Use Your Senses

Dental smells – Yuck!

Open the door to a dental office, and the first thing that hits you is the strong “dental office” smell! We all know that smell, and it usually stirs up bad feelings in our stomachs.

This is because the sense of smell is one of the strongest senses in the human body.

Also, it has amazing power to stimulate your memory to instantly recall certain events, times, etc., related to a specific scent. Often, this means that dental smells:

- make you think of pain; or
- bring on sweaty palms; or
- just make you anxious.

All of this, just from a SMELL!

Personally, I hate the smell of a dental office – and I am a dentist! But, in my office, I go out of my way to minimize the “dental office” smell.

Also, in an endodontist’s office, we do not use the same materials a general dentist’s office does. So, our offices usually do not have that strong, dental office odor anyway.

But, I use air fresheners strategically placed ALL OVER my office. We get comments all the time from patients – “Why does it smell so nice in here?” At least once a week we get
compliments from patients about the nice scent in our office. (We use papaya-mango, liquid air fresheners.)

Some people may say this just masks the smell of the dental office. But in our office it really doesn’t just mask the smell. Our office actually smells like papaya-mango!

This concept can help you as a patient if you use the following simple tips to help you keep out unwanted smells.

- Before your appointment, wear some kind of lip gloss that has an odor that you like; or
- Place a small “dab” of your perfume or cologne near each nostril; or
- If you ask to use the laughing gas, you will be wearing a mask over your nose – this, too, helps keep out unwanted smells.

These techniques may sound simplistic, but the sense of smell is a very powerful one. Since it can evoke strong emotions, both good and bad, I personally will do anything I can to avoid bad smells.

Avoiding unpleasant odors can be a big help to surviving your root canal treatment.

**Dental sights and sounds**

Two other concerns I frequently hear from my patients are:

1. “I can’t stand the sight of the needle!”, and
2. “The sound of the drill totally freaks me out!”

Both are huge worries for many patients. You can help yourself survive both of these concerns.

**Dental sights**

First, *sights* in a dental office can be very disconcerting.

Recently, I went to a doctor’s appointment for myself. It was the first time to visit this particular office. I knew the doctor to be a good guy, but I had never been inside his office.

Sitting in the reception room, I could see an empty paper cup on the floor behind a chair, several pieces of “litter” on a very dusty table, and several old, torn up magazines on the table. Not what you want to see in your doctor’s office!

I decided to stay to see the doctor, but when I got to the exam room, it didn’t get much better. There was a dirty piece of cotton gauze lying on the floor, water splattered all over the counter, and dirt all over the floor next to the examining table.
Now, some would say this happens throughout a busy day, but I WAS THE FIRST PATIENT OF THE DAY! So, everything I was seeing had NOT been cleaned up since the prior day?!

I left the office without seeing the doctor. (I did later inform the doctor of what happened, but I have never been back to his office.)

My point for you is, if you do not like what your sense of SIGHT is telling you, if you are so inclined, discuss it with the doctor and/or staff. Or, GET UP AND LEAVE!

You can’t expect perfection, but you have every right to expect a very clean environment, especially in a medical/dental office setting. I am a huge proponent of this.

I keep a meticulously clean office! We get comments all the time on how clean our office is. You should expect the same from your dentist’s office. If you are not happy, discuss it or get up and leave!

The other visual that really disturbs a lot of people is the sight of the dental instruments, especially the needle! Again, without sounding too simplistic, this is very easy for you to handle.

When you enter the treatment room, make a concerted effort NOT to look at the instrument setup. Then, tell the dentist that you are afraid of the needle, and you absolutely don’t want to see it.

Ask him if he will please give you plenty of warning when it comes time for your shot. Then, with that warning, simply:

CLOSE YOUR EYES!

A simple, but highly successful solution for those of you who hate the sight of the needle!!

Dental sounds

“Torture” comes to mind when one hears the sound of a dental drill! The high-pitched sound of the dental drill can elicit fear and anxiety in the toughest of us.

YOU can manage this noise and the other noises of the dental office, such as clanging instruments right next to your ear, the loud suction sounds, etc. The best way is to:

turn on, turn up, and tune out

the surrounding sounds by bringing your own iPod or MP3 player. Some dental offices even provide you with one of these, if you ask.
But, don’t rely on the office. Bring your own if the noise is going to bother you! This leaves YOU in control of what you are hearing, and allows you to mask those sounds that make you anxious.

Less anxious…less tense…easier to survive the root canal ordeal!

**Touch**

A gentle touch on the shoulder from the dentist or assistant is very comforting to any patient. But, one step further is actually being able to hold the hand of the assistant, especially during the injection.

Go ahead and ask if you can hold their hand. It can be very reassuring to you.

Two other areas come to mind when thinking about the sense of touch at a dental appointment.

1. One is the big, fat lip and drooling tongue you feel when you are numb, especially for lower teeth. Just know that this is going to happen. It feels weird, but it doesn’t last long.

   Think of it as a good thing: *numb lip and tongue can mean numb tooth!*

2. Another touch sensation is the constant feeling of debris and “junk” you feel in your mouth. Often there really is no debris, it just feels like it.

   Or, often you are not sure if you should swallow, so saliva builds up and can feel like junk in your mouth. It is perfectly okay to raise your hand and ask nicely if the assistant would please suction out your mouth.

Keeping your mouth cleaned out gives you a much more secure feeling that you are not going to drown in your own saliva! (Which would be a terrible way to go!) So, again, take control of your own survival, and simply ask for some suction.

**Dental tastes – Yuck!**

Okay, the many tastes you experience during dental treatment are all terrible. It is a fact. I often tell my patients:

  **“If it tasted good, it wouldn’t work!”**

But, it is true that the topical junk we put on the gum before the shot, the shot liquid itself, and the various other materials we use during treatment, are all usually foul tasting.
To be honest, there is not a lot you can do to help yourself deal with these. Asking for suction periodically is always good.

**Mom’s advice:** When I was a young boy, my mom would make me eat Brussels sprouts. I hated the taste of them. (Even now, I get a sick feeling just thinking about that taste! Yuck!)

Besides telling me to suck it up and eat them, her motherly advice was to hold my breath and swallow. That advice can actually help YOU survive your root canal experience when you find those terrible tastes in your mouth!

If you have to swallow, try holding your breath and swallowing hard. It really does help you at least tolerate the bad tastes!

When your appointment is over, ask if you can rinse with some mouthwash before you leave. Most offices will gladly let you rinse your mouth.

This helps you leave with a better taste in your mouth, so the last thing you remember is not that gross taste you had when you went to the dentist.

**Tip #6: Find a KIND Office**

This is a really important tip to help you survive your root canal experience. In Tip #2, I recommended you ask the dental office if you could make an appointment for an evaluation first, before the actual treatment appointment. If you are able to do that, you then have the opportunity to find a kind office.

**First impressions**

**First contact:** Find an office with people who are kind to you when you first call to speak to them. Your first impression of most offices will be from your first phone call to that office.

How many times have you called a business, and the first voice you hear says, “Can you hold?” Not good morning. Not hello. Just, “Can you hold?” It drives me crazy.

**You can tell a great deal about how kind an office is by listening to their phone greeting!**

The phone is a window to any business. At my office, every time you call, you will hear, “Good morning, this is Dr. Rick Morgan’s office, this is Denise. May I help you?”
EVERY TIME. Period. I truly believe everyone who calls my office deserves to be treated in a kind and respectful manner. We live by this rule:

The most important job in our office is ANSWERING THE PHONE!

If a caller is turned off by the person answering the phone, they are likely going to look elsewhere for an appointment. And, that is what this tip is all about.

You are looking for an office that will help you survive your root canal. Find an office that treats you kindly right off the bat.

“Dental ambience”

In my opinion, being nice and kind to our patients are the most important things we can do for them. But, we also strive to have a place they can come and at least feel comfortable with the surroundings. A kind office will try to create a reception room that is clean, comfy, and calming.

The “ambience” of a dental office is not something you should have to think about. It is just an overall feeling you get about the whole environment in an office.

This can include the artwork on the walls, the furniture, the staff smiles (or lack thereof!), how the staff dresses, etc. You should have a good feeling about that environment or ambience.

If you don’t, then you may feel a little more tense and nervous, making it just a little more difficult to get through your root canal.

Observe the staff

The staff at the dental office will be your first face-to-face contact. The staff is a window to the dentist in many ways. In most cases, a kind dentist will have a kind staff.

If you walk in, and no one greets you, or worse yet, they ignore you, kindness may not be the rule in that office! And, if you are not treated with respect, kindness may not be the rule.

To help yourself survive your root canal experience, you need to find an office with staff members who are helpful, smiling, and KIND.

The dentist is the leader of the office

Know this: the dentist determines the demeanor of his or her office. Kindness starts from the top.
Watch closely how the dentist treats his staff. You will learn a great deal how you will be treated.

Equally important is the chairside manner of the dentist. Look for:

- a gentle touch,
- a listening ear, and
- a compassionate attitude.

If you are not comfortable with how the leader of that office treats you, then you will not be comfortable getting your root canal. Your “root canal survival” will be in question!

Look for an after-hours “Lifeline”

An important question to ask your dental office:

“Do you have a way for me to contact the dentist if I have a problem after-hours?”

A kind office will have a way for you to get help if you have a problem after-hours. If you have the assurance that “lifeline” will be there if you need it, it will be much easier for you to go in for your root canal.

Problems and pain after a root canal are rare. But, if you happen to be one of the rare ones with a problem, it is very comforting for you knowing help is available.

“What if I don’t like the office?”

Glad you asked! If you don’t feel like the office where you are going is a kind place. Or, if you are not happy with the staff or the dentist. Or, if you are just not comfortable. Then, my recommendation is to look for another office.

If you were referred to that office by your general dentist, call them and ask for another office to try. Never be afraid to try another office in your quest for survival!

One last note. Many of you may live in a rural area or an area with no other choice of offices. So, looking for another office may not be an option.

Personally, I would look maybe in the nearest larger city or town and accept the longer drive to find that kind office. If that is not an option, be as kind and helpful as you can to the office, and pray they will change!
Tip #7: Money!

Root canal = investment?!

How in the world can the cost of a root canal be considered an investment?! My answer is very simple

Your teeth are part of your body!

And, anything you can do to take care of a part of your body and keep it as long as possible is a great investment. Period!

Now, I know the initial cost of a root canal is very expensive and can be a major deterrent to you choosing to proceed. It may seem to be much smarter, cheaper, and easier to just “yank it out”.

Well, it is true, it is always less expensive to just pull your tooth. But, when you do, you will have just invested in having a big, fat hole in your mouth where your tooth was. Is that a good investment?

Some will say:

“Yeah, but I can always get a replacement tooth.”

True. But, when you choose to do that, your investment costs can go up. Most often, bridges and implants will be even more expensive than choosing to keep your tooth. Is that a good investment?

And, if you choose a bridge to replace the missing tooth, you then have invested in drilling on two or more anchor teeth that may be in perfectly good shape. Is that a good investment?

To help my patients survive their root canal and keep their tooth, here is the way I always tell my patients to think about the cost. I am not trying to be condescending or simplistic.

Because your teeth are an extremely important part of your body, look at the cost over time. For example, you would not buy a $20,000 car if you knew it was only going to last a year. That cost over time would be an insane “investment”.

Use that same thought process when you look at the cost of the root canal. If you spend $900 for a root canal that will usually last you well over 10 years, then you are spending $90 per year, $7.50 per month, 25 cents a day!

25 cents a day to keep part of your body?!?!
To me, that is a no-brainer, long-term investment in my health. Looking at it like that might help you realize that surviving the “high cost of a root canal” is not so hard.

Why is it so expensive?

Great question! I hear this question often. And, I love answering it. Weird, I know, but I told you I was a little weird!

Three reasons come to mind when I discuss my fees with my patients:

1. **First, a root canal provides a super, LONG-TERM service to you.**

   We all willingly spend lots of our money buying things that may not be that great for us and will likely not last too long.

2. **Secondly, learning to do a great root canal takes a lot of expert training.**

   Just to become a specialist in root canals, an endodontist has to spend two years in a residency (after the 4 years of dental school) learning how to do a great root canal!

   Be willing to pay for that level of training – it makes it easier to accept when you know that the one who is going to be poking you, giving you all kinds of medicine, and working on your tooth has had all that extra training!

3. **Lastly, doing an exceptional root canal is very tedious and difficult.**

   To do it properly, we have to be accurate to within a half millimeter! And, we have to be that accurate inside a space that we often CANNOT SEE!

So, dentists often invest in the best, but very expensive, equipment so we can deliver the best root canal you could possibly get!!

*Providing a great service + using great expertise +
  doing a very tedious and difficult treatment =
  HIGH-COST, BUT GREAT LONG-TERM INVESTMENT!*

Talk about the cost in advance

**No surprises.** This is another way I like to help my patients survive their root canal. We ALWAYS discuss the cost of our treatment before even scheduling it. We do this out of respect for our patients.
I touched on this a little in an earlier section. You need to **ASK** the staff how much it is going to cost.

Why is this important? Knowing in advance what you will have to pay will give you a chance to figure out just how you are going to pay for it.

Instead of sitting in the dental chair, upside down, getting a root canal and worrying about how much it is going to cost, **ASK ABOUT THE COST BEFORE TREATMENT IS STARTED.**

Your stress level will be lower, and your survival rate higher!

Frequently, I hear from patients,

> "I am uncomfortable bringing up money to my dentist or the staff."

Do not be afraid to discuss money. It is your money! If an office will not readily discuss their fees and payment policies, I would recommend finding another office.

My staff and I want our patients to know in advance what to expect. They deserve to know. Just **ASK!**

**The cost of pulling it can be greater than the cost of the root canal!**

How can this be true? Well, in fact, if you elect to just pull a tooth and do nothing ever, then, this statement would not be true.

But, the vast majority of you will want to either replace the tooth very soon after the extraction or at some point in your lifetime. This is where the cost to extract becomes much more than the cost of the root canal.

So, when trying to figure out whether you should try to “survive” a root canal or just pull the tooth because it is “**cheaper**”, consider:

- Even if you factor in the cost of the crown or filling that is required after a root canal, your cost to extract a tooth can be much higher in the long run. One major reason is what can happen **if you choose NOT to replace it.**

  Teeth on either side of the tooth you extract can drift into the space left by the extracted tooth. This can cause major problems over the long run. When these teeth drift, they can eventually interfere with your normal chewing.
This problem, when addressed, can usually be quite costly, maybe requiring orthodontics.

- Another problem with pulling a tooth is you will *usually lose some chewing ability*. This may not be a major concern, because we humans are real good at figuring how to eat our food. We can “gum it to death” if we have to!

  But, this is a quality of life concern. I like eating – and this requires chewing. I want to have as much chewing efficiency as I possibly can!

- Have you ever seen a picture of someone who has no teeth? You can readily see how *losing your teeth affects your facial structure*.

  Teeth actually serve to preserve your bone structure which keeps your facial structure looking good! The more teeth that are missing, the more it can affect the look of your face.

So, there are some real concerns if you choose to pull your teeth and not replace them.

If, however, you are thinking you will just pull it and replace it (instead of doing the root canal), the options you have are usually more costly than if you had done the root canal and kept your own tooth.

**Three Main Choices If You Choose to Pull Your Tooth:** All of these work. Each has advantages and disadvantages. And, each option is expensive.

1. The most costly option is usually a *surgical implant with a crown*. It is expensive because it involves a surgical step before the crown.

   **Implants are an excellent choice to replace missing teeth!** I frequently tell a patient that their natural tooth cannot be saved, and I refer them for an implant.

   But, an implant is not the best choice if your OWN tooth can be saved with a root canal and crown. And, implants are, in almost every case, more expensive.

2. You may choose not to do an implant, and choose to do a *bridge* instead. **Again, a bridge is an excellent choice to replace missing teeth.**

   But, again, the cost of a bridge is usually more expensive than the root canal and crown.
And, even more importantly, to make a bridge, we have to drill on two or more adjacent teeth to anchor the bridge. These may be perfectly good teeth, but will have to be drilled on to accommodate the bridge.

*If I have to choose between a root canal and crown or a more costly bridge that requires drilling on two perfectly good teeth, I will always choose the root canal and crown!*

3. The other option that is usually close to the cost of the root canal and crown is a **removable partial denture**. This, too, is an excellent choice to replace missing teeth.

However, the major drawback is that you have to wear a “foreign object” in your mouth. Many people wear these with absolutely no problems.

But, if the choice is a root canal and crown or some removable device, again, I will choose to keep my natural tooth every time.

**Dental insurance**

Dental insurance can be a great help to you. There are good insurance plans and some that are not so good.

The important thing to know is that very few plans will pay for ALL the cost of a root canal (or any dental treatment for that matter!). Every dental insurance company has a dollar figure that they use to determine what they will pay toward your root canal.

In insurance lingo, this is called the **USUAL AND CUSTOMARY RATE (UCR)**. And, every company is different.

To help you survive the dental insurance maze, ask the staff for their help. They can usually get an **ESTIMATE** of what your company will pay toward the root canal treatment.

Then, you will have an idea of how much you will have to pay out of your own pocket. Remember, your insurance is a contract between you and your insurance company, so you can often find out details of payment from the insurance company directly. (Believe me, the insurance company would rather talk to you, than to the dental offices!).

Calling them before your treatment can often give you some peace of mind because you will have a better idea of your responsibility.

Remember, any money you get from your insurance company that can be used to pay toward the cost of your root canal will ease the pain on your pocketbook. And, hence, help you survive your root canal!
You have options to help you pay

These tips will be some of the most important ideas for you to take from this ebook. All dentists want you to be able to pay for your treatment. Some make it easier to pay than others.

We have several payment options to help our patients better afford their treatment. **Ask what your options are.**

Here are some options you need to explore with the staff at the dental office:

1. **Dental insurance:** First, try to find out what your insurance will pay, and get an estimate for what you will owe.

2. **If you do not have dental insurance:** Find out the total fee for the root canal. Once you know how much you will have to pay, ask the staff what your options are for paying.

   Ask the staff if they give any discounts for paying the fee in full. Some offices do this to give the patients a break, while at the same time being able to collect the full fee. It really is a win-win situation!

3. **Credit Cards or Debit Cards:** The vast majority of offices accept credit and debit cards. These can be great options for patients.

   Don’t assume they accept these cards. Ask in advance. If they do, you can then do your budgeting accordingly.

4. **Payment Plans:** Ask if they have any payment plans to help you pay for the root canal.

   Some offices have customized payment plans specific to their offices. Others accept various healthcare “credit cards”, such as CareCredit.

   Payment plans are a super way for you to spread your payments over time, which alleviates the initial high costs. Some of the plans will charge you interest, but some offices will actually pay the interest for you, thereby making it an interest-free option!

5. **Autodrafts:** Some offices may offer payment plans that would involve autodrafts from your checking account or credit or debit cards. Set up on a monthly basis, this can be another great way for you to pay.

So, if you are thinking you cannot survive the cost of the root canal, use these money tips to help you figure how you can more easily pay for it.

These tips can help you avoid an extraction, and more costly replacement.
And, you will see that you really CAN survive the money aspect of the root canal!

Git ‘er Done!

I truly hope in some small way this book has helped ease your fears, apprehension, and concerns about getting “the dreaded root canal”. These tips are meant to help make the whole root canal experience easier and more comfortable for you.

Any ONE of these tips by themselves may not be much help. But, if you combine these tips and follow the advice I have given, you really will have the best root canal ever!

So, always remember, doing the root canal treatment can lead to:

**No fake tooth!**

Surviving your root canal means saving your tooth – no fake tooth!

AND

**No more toothache!**

Surviving your root canal means getting relief from your pain – no more toothache!

*It is a major accomplishment, and one you can be proud of!*

So, you no longer need to ask, “Should I keep my tooth or pull it and get an artificial one?”

**Take a “SIU” pill!**

Finally, to you I say, “Be brave!” I tell my staff and my daughter when things get tough, take a “SIU pill”. They squinch up their faces and look at me like I have lost my mind!

I tell them sometimes we just have to Suck It Up (“SIU “pill!), and just get the job done!

So, when you are preparing for your root canal:

- Use the 7 tips in this ebook
- Take a “SIU” pill
Use positive thinking
Use prayer
Do whatever it is that you need to do to

GIT ‘ER DONE!

Some final thoughts

Would you please do me a favor? I would really appreciate hearing from each one of you. If you have any questions about these tips; or if you have any general dental questions, no matter how insignificant or foolish you may think they are, please email me with those questions.

I will do everything in my power to answer you quickly or at least steer you in the right direction to find the answer. I love dentistry and love talking about it. So, feel free to send me your questions!

Also, after you have read this book, used these tips, and survived your root canal, I would love to hear from you on the experience. Let me know if these tips, in fact, helped you “survive”. Your testimonial will be truly appreciated, good or bad.

And, finally, if you have a root canal story you would like to share, I would love to hear about it. I may even use it in a future book (with your permission, of course).

You can contact me via email at DrRickMorgan@rootcanalsurvival.com.

I truly thank you again for honoring me by taking your time to read my book. And, I applaud you for being brave!

Here’s to you and your
ROOT CANAL SURVIVAL!
Free Bonus Report

How to Prevent Gagging at the Dentist!

Introduction

I am a practicing endodontist – a root canal specialist. I have been a dentist for 25 years, and I love taking care of my patients. As a root canal specialist, I know I can relieve my patient’s pain and help them save their teeth. A very rewarding job!

I deal with a wide variety of concerns that my patients have. One very real concern is GAGGING while at the dentist. Now, please understand, I am a gagger! So, I can relate to these patients and their fear.

I once had a patient come to me for root canal treatment. He was a big guy, but he had true fear in his eyes! When I walked in to meet him, I shook his hand, and I felt he had a sweaty palm – and I hadn’t even looked in his mouth yet!

Why was this guy so afraid? Afraid of shots? Worried about getting a root canal? Worried about pain? NO!

His biggest fear was GAGGING!

He said, “Doc, I can’t stand to have anything in my mouth. I gag when I brush my own teeth! I don’t think I can do this. My gagging is why I have waited so long to come back to the dentist. I feel like I am going to drown or choke to death whenever I get any work done in my mouth.”

Before I even approached his mouth, I had a long discussion with him. I shared with him the tips I am sharing with you in this free bonus report.

When we were through with the root canal procedure, he was so happy! He had gotten through the entire procedure without gagging even one time!

This was a BIG deal for him, as it is for thousands of dental patients. Are you a gagger? Worried about going to the dentist for fear of gagging? Then, follow these tips and tricks and you can make the entire experience easier to handle and reduce a major fear factor in yourself. And, you can face going to the dentist with confidence!

What is gagging?

One definition found in a medical dictionary states:
“a gag reflex is a normal reflex action caused by contraction of pharynx muscles when the soft palate or posterior pharynx is touched.”

Well, I don’t know about you, but I don’t feel normal when I feel like I am drowning in my own saliva! So, I don’t care that it is defined as a normal reflex action. I care that I don’t want to gag!

There are several good online sites that deal with gagging, tips to prevent gagging, etc. My intent with this free bonus report is to condense these tips into one place for you to use.

**Tips and tricks to prevent gagging**

1. A guaranteed way to totally prevent gagging is to **HOLD YOUR BREATHE!**

   Now, I know you can’t hold your breath during an entire dental procedure. But, for most people, it is only specific times during treatment that cause them to gag – taking x-rays, for example.

   So, anytime you are faced with a short, “potentially gagging” procedure: when they are ready to place the x-ray, or start that procedure, take a deep breath and hold it until they finish.

   It works EVERYTIME!!! It is physiologically impossible to gag while you are holding your breath.

2. **BREATHE ONLY THROUGH YOUR NOSE.** This is something you can do during the entire procedure. Deep nose-breathing makes it easier for your pharynx/soft palate to tolerate being touched.

   And, the result is you are less prone to gag!

3. Another way to help yourself during short procedures as noted in #1 above, is to do a **LEG LIFT.** Raise one leg off the chair and hold it up while they are doing the procedure. This is a mental trick that shifts your focus away from your mouth to your leg!

4. Ask to use **LAUGHING GAS** (nitrous oxide and oxygen). This has an overall sedative effect and helps lower the sensitivity of your gag reflex.

5. Oftentimes, using a **TOPICAL GEL OR SPRAY** on the soft palate will serve to numb that area and make it a lot less susceptible to gagging. You can ask the dentist if they have one they can use on you. Or, you can try some over-the-counter throat sprays. 2-3 sprays on the palate right before treatment helps a lot of people.
6. Some of my patients prefer prescription **ORAL SEDATIVE PILLS** before their appointments. Your dentist can prescribe these to be taken about an hour before your appointment. The sedative effect can make you less prone to feeling like you are going to gag.

7. In rare cases, some patients have such a severely sensitive gag response that they have to be more heavily sedated with the use of **IV SEDATION MEDICATIONS**. Since most dentists do not administer IV sedation, this is only applicable to those rare situations when the tips listed above do not work.

**YOU CAN DO IT!**

Being a gagger does not mean you are a wimp! It is a true, physiological reflex that we all have to deal with. Some people have a much more sensitive reflex than others.

Talk to your dentist and the assistants about your concerns about gagging. If they know ahead of time, they can alter some of their techniques to help you.

*Don’t let a bad gag reflex keep you from going to the dentist!*

Try these tips and tricks. It may take 1 or 2 times of trying before you find which works best for you. But, these tips do work and have helped every patient I have who has a bad gag reflex. If these tips can help them, I know they can help you! Go to the dentist with confidence.

**I know **YOU CAN DO IT**!