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Saving Teeth, One Root Canal at a Time

Dispelling common myths about root canals

Glendale, AZ (June 23, 2008) -- Root canals have long suffered from a bad reputation, which is used by many comedians as a measure of pain, but that is a bit unfair. The procedure is actually an important tool dentists use to save teeth that otherwise could be lost or severely infected.

“People who have experienced the procedure recently will tell you that it’s much easier than they anticipated and the tooth was saved,” says Jerry Denning, DDS, a dental consultant for Delta Dental of Arizona. “Once you understand what to expect and some of the common misconceptions about root canal therapy, there is really little need for anxiety.”

Dr. Denning identified a few of the most common misunderstandings about root canals.

Myth 1: Root canals are painful and lengthy procedures.

Advances in techniques and equipment have made root canals quicker, easier and less uncomfortable than ever before. In many cases, the procedure is completed during a single office visit.

Myth 2: Root canals remove the roots of the teeth.

Under the hard enamel of the tooth lie nerves and tissue, also called pulp. An existing cavity or trauma to the tooth can create a pathway for bacteria to pass through the tooth and reach the pulp. The resulting infection can become very painful and harmful to the health of the tooth. A root canal procedure involves removing the nerve and pulp of the tooth, cleaning the inside of the tooth and sealing it to prevent the reentry of bacteria and further decay and infection.

Myth 3: If you need a root canal, you’ll know it.

There are some common symptoms that can point to the need for a root canal. A severe toothache, swelling or small sores on your gums, prolonged sensitivity to hot and cold or a darkened tooth, can all indicate an infection in the tooth. In some cases, there are no symptoms present, so it’s important to see your dentist for exams and cleanings so he or she can assess the state of your oral health.

“If you experience any pain, swelling or other changes in your mouth, it’s important to see your dentist right away so he or she can determine the problem and prescribe the best course of



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treatment,” says Dr. Denning. “Only your dentist knows for sure when a root canal may be required to save a tooth.”

About Delta Dental of Arizona

Delta Dental of Arizona is the leading dental benefits provider in Arizona with the largest network of 2,800 dentists, servicing more than 4,500 locations and representing more than 80 percent of all dentists throughout the state. Passionate about oral health and its importance to generations of families, Delta Dental of Arizona has worked for more than 35 years to improve oral health by emphasizing preventative care and making dental coverage accessible for a wide variety of employers, groups and individuals. Delta Dental of Arizona now offers DeltaVision, group vision benefits. Now quality dental and vision benefits are both available from a single, trusted source. For more information about Delta Dental of Arizona, please visit the website at www.deltadentalaz.com.

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