

SAVING YOUR NATURAL TEETH

Often a patient's initial thought regarding tooth pain is extraction. If you or someone you know has ever experienced a toothache, you can sympathize. However, saving your natural teeth should always be your first choice when dental care is needed.

St. John's County Commissioner Ron Sanchez knew he had a problem. "I went to my family dentist and learned that one of my teeth had cracked," explains Ron. "This crack in my tooth actually went down into the canal, so I needed a root canal in order to save it." Something as common as grinding your teeth at night can cause these types of cracks, resulting in the need for root canal therapy.



EMILY W. TYLER, DMD

After Ron was examined by his general dentist, he was informed that he would need to see an endodontist for the root canal procedure. He chose to see Dr. Emily Tyler of Oceanside Endodontics of St. Augustine. "I chose Dr. Tyler," says Ron, "and I was very glad I did. It worked out well. The appointment was very professional, Dr. Tyler was excellent, and her staff was excellent. I was very pleased with the entire appointment."

What is a root canal?

To most people, the term *root canal* can cause a patient to avoid seeking treatment. Dr. Tyler states, "There is this preconceived notion that root canal treatment is a painful procedure. This is nothing more than an outdated myth." In reality, root canal treatment does not cause pain – it relieves it. Due to advancements in techniques and anesthesia, treatment is virtually pain-free, and is often accomplished in a single visit. In spite of this, many patients still do not know what to expect during a root canal procedure.

A root canal becomes necessary when the nerves and soft tissue inside the tooth become inflamed or infected. During the



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Much to his surprise, Ron says that he found the root canal experience to be a pleasant one.

procedure, the endodontist makes a small opening in the crown of the tooth, then uses small instruments to clean and disinfect the inside of the tooth.

After the root canal space is cleaned and shaped, the endodontist fills the canals with a biocompatible, rubber-like material and an adhesive cement to ensure complete sealing of the canals. The final restoration of the tooth is then accomplished by the referring dentist in most cases. After restoration, the tooth continues to function like any other tooth.

More comfortable than ever

Endodontists are dentists with at least two additional years of advanced specialty training in root canal treatments. Because their practice is limited to endodontics, they treat these types of problems every day. Using the most modern equipment and techniques available, including operating microscopes, ultrasonics, and digital imaging, they use their special training and experience to treat difficult cases, such as teeth with narrow or blocked canals, or unusual anatomy.

"A root canal should not be a scary or traumatic event," assures Dr. Tyler. "Unfortunately, the term 'root canal' itself has always had such a negative connotation that some of the patients I see are scared or very anxious at first. They have heard unpleasant stories from people they know, often talking about root canal procedures from many years ago. The procedure has really improved from what it used to be, and is not something to be afraid of."

"In recent years, there have been many advancements in dental instrumentation. For example, during every procedure I perform, I use an operating microscope, which greatly increases the success rate of root canals. If we have to drill through a crown, the operating microscope allows us to make smaller holes, thus enabling us to save more of the original tooth structure."

"We usually accomplish a standard root canal using local anesthesia. For those patients who are particularly

THE ROOT CANAL SPECIALISTS

Dr. Tyler looks forward to hearing from the readers of *Florida Health Care News*. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, please call (904) 217-7012. Oceanside Endodontics of St. Augustine is located at 2510 US Highway 1 South, Suite B, in St. Augustine.



PHOTO BY JESSICA JOHNSON

Acquiring state-of-the-art equipment has helped the staff better treat patients.

anxious, there are medications and treatment options that can be discussed during a consultation appointment prior to the actual treatment, if needed." Dr. Tyler emphasizes the fact that "the entire procedure should be pain free, and it should not be perceived as even a potentially painful experience. Our goal is to make the patient as comfortable as possible."

"Finally, modern instrumentation allows the procedure to be much quicker than it was in the past. I have patients who come to us and say, *I remember my first root canal – I had to come back three times for them to finish it.* These days, most root canal procedures can be completed in one appointment."

For the first few days after a root canal, the treated tooth may feel sensitive or sore, particularly if there was inflammation or an infection prior to the procedure. However, the discomfort can typically be relieved with an over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

Dr. Tyler adds that, in Ron's case, root canal treatment was the appropriate procedure, enabling him to actually save a tooth on more than one occasion.

"I'm very happy"

Ron's first root canal was a success, he confirms, emphasizing that he chose to return to Dr. Tyler for root canal treatment when he developed a crack in a second tooth.

"The first one was in late summer of 2012," he recalls, "but several months later there was another tooth

that cracked and I had to go through the same procedure. When I was told that I needed another root canal, I asked to be referred back to Dr. Tyler to have the second root canal done."

"The first tooth that cracked was a top back molar," he explains. "Then the second one was on the bottom left side. I had that one done in January [2013]."

Ron agrees with the doctor that modern instruments and dental methods have made the root canal procedure easy to tolerate, and he notes that such was the case for both of his root canal treatments.

"I have to say, even though root canals are not the most pleasant thing that you can plan on doing, my experience was...well, I hate to use the word 'pleasant' when referring to a root canal, but it actually was! So I am very, very happy."

He thanks Dr. Tyler and the staff of Oceanside Endodontics of St. Augustine, adding that they combine expertise in endodontics with compassion for patients, many of whom are understandably nervous when they first come into the office.

"The staff is very pleasant, and so is Dr. Tyler," Ron says. "She has a very caring attitude, and you not only experience that when she's asking you questions about sensitivity and things like that, but you can also feel it. She really cares about what she does." *PHCN—Michael J. Sabno*

Services Provided

- Root Canal Treatment
- Microscopic Endodontic Surgery
- Endodontic Re-treatment
- Emergency Dental Treatment
- Cracked Tooth Treatment
- Traumatic Dental Injury Treatment



Emily W. Tyler, DMD, received her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Florida College of Dentistry, graduating magna cum laude. She completed her endodontic residency at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston, MA. Dr. Tyler is a member of the American Association of Endodontists, the Florida Association of Endodontists, the American Dental Association, the Florida Dental Association, the Jacksonville Dental Society, and the St. Augustine Dental Society.

VISIT OCEANSIDE ENDODONTICS OF ST. AUGUSTINE ON THE WEB AT WWW.OS-ENDO.COM.