



This patient information sheet answers frequently asked questions about having a pulpotomy. It has been developed to be used in discussion with your dental practitioner.

1. What is a pulpotomy?

A pulpotomy is the partial removal of the pulp from a tooth. Pulp is the soft tissue inside the crown and roots of teeth containing nerves and blood vessels. Only tissue from the crown of the tooth is removed during a pulpotomy.

2. Why has my dental practitioner suggested a pulpotomy?

A pulpotomy is undertaken when the pulp is exposed while removing deep tooth decay. If the tooth decay is left untreated it may progress to the pulp and cause inflammation and infection. You may experience symptoms of pain and/or increased sensitivity to hot and cold if suffering from an infected pulp.

Pulpotomies are undertaken on baby teeth for the purpose of retaining them until they fall out naturally. A pulpotomy is not recommended if there is evidence the adult tooth has begun to come through the gum (erupt). The tooth may be seen visually or on x-ray.

3. What happens during a pulpotomy?

An x-ray of the tooth and surrounding structures will be taken. You will have a gel rubbed onto your gum and an injection of local anaesthetic. The gel makes the injection more comfortable. The local anaesthetic will numb your tooth and the area around your tooth. It is used to prevent or relieve pain, but will not put you to sleep.

Your tooth may be covered with a small rubber sheet that isolates the tooth being treated from the rest of the mouth.

Your dental practitioner will remove all of the tooth decay and gain access to the pulp of the tooth. The open chamber of the tooth is then treated and sealed with a filling. A stainless steel crown may be placed on top of your tooth to protect the tooth from fracture.

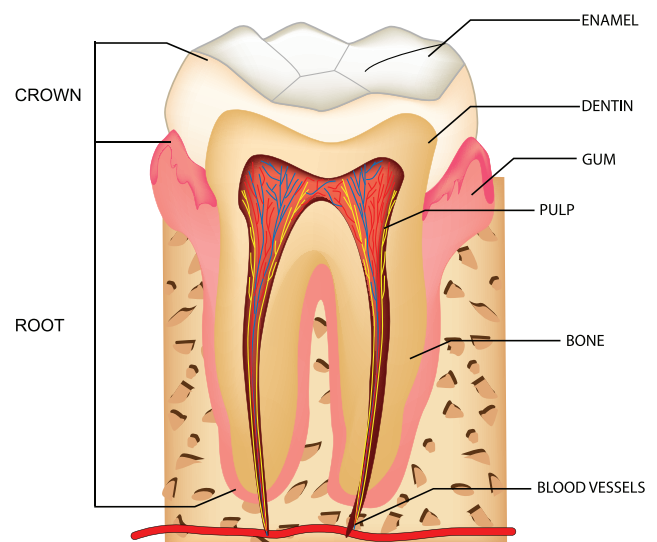


Image 1: Human tooth cross section

4. What are the risks and complications of pulpotomy?

Pulpotomies have a high success rate. If pain or sensitivity continues after a pulpotomy, return to the dental clinic. The tooth may require an extraction.

Common risks and complications include:

- pain: mild, temporary pain following a pulpotomy may occur due to inflammation of the tissues surrounding the tooth, however, severe or persistent pain may require more treatment
- infection
- discolouration: a tooth may become darker following pulpotomy
- tooth fracture: a pulpotomy may reduce the strength and durability of a tooth, making it more likely to fracture; this risk is reduced by using a strong filling or crown
- damage to lips and cheeks: you may bite or rub the numbed area without realising the damage you may be causing; children may need to be supervised until the numbness has worn off.

Death as a result of this procedure is extremely rare.



This procedure will require a local anaesthetic. Please refer to the patient information *Local anaesthetic* available on the informed consent website: www.health.qld.gov.au/consent

Read about mouth care for yourself, babies, infants and children, and teenagers, emergencies and accidents, mouthguards, water fluoridation, and available dental services on the Queensland Health Oral Health website: www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth



www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/atods/smoking/index.html

Please ask your dental practitioner if you do not understand any aspect of the information in this patient information sheet or any other information you have been given about your condition, treatment options and proposed procedure.

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To find a public local dental clinic, search the Queensland Health Oral Health website “Contact Us” section for a dental service list. The website is: www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/contact_us.asp



Your local contact details are:

