



AAE FACT SHEET

AAE members may photocopy this fact sheet for distribution to patients or referring dentists.

TOOTH SAVING TIPS

Dentists today are doing everything possible to save teeth. But sometimes patients don't understand their options or they feel that having a tooth extracted is the easiest and most economical way to treat the problem.

More than 40 million teeth are extracted each year and many of these extractions are unnecessary.

The American Association of Endodontists wants the public to know that saving a tooth should always be the first choice for the greatest health and cosmetic results, and offers these guidelines for obtaining the best possible dental treatment.

1. If given a choice between endodontic (root canal) treatment or tooth extraction, always choose endodontic treatment. Dentistry has yet to produce a denture or bridge that function as well as a natural tooth.
2. If your dentist recommends tooth extraction, ask whether endodontic treatment is an option, and if not, why not.
3. If your dentist says that an endodontic procedure would be very difficult and might fail, ask about referral to an endodontist. Endodontists are dentists with at least two years advanced training in root canal procedures who limit their practices to endodontics and specialize in difficult cases.
4. Endodontic treatment most likely will cost more than an extraction. But when a tooth is extracted, it must be replaced to prevent other teeth from shifting and to prevent future periodontal disease (gum disease), if not for cosmetic reasons alone. The cost of the denture or bridge, plus the extraction, often is more than an endodontic procedure that would save the tooth. Most dental insurance plans cover endodontic treatment.
5. Never choose extraction because you think endodontic treatment will be painful. Modern techniques and effective anesthesia make the treatment virtually painless. Post procedure discomfort is generally greater with a tooth extraction than root canal treatment.
6. Never choose extraction because it's quicker. Endodontic treatments generally require two visits lasting less than an hour each. Extraction may be over in moments, but the denture or bridge will require additional visits with your dentist.
7. For more information, contact:
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