

Treating Compromised Teeth

This information sheet has been designed to inform you of the treatment that has been proposed in your individual case. Please take the time to read the information and please do not hesitate to ask if you any queries.

Dr Thai would like to inform you that your tooth is in what we consider to be, a compromised state. This is due to one or more factors:

- Deep cavity
- Large filling
- Suffering excessive grinding pressure
- Deep cracks
- Fractured badly
- Sustained heavy trauma
- Suffering advanced gum disease

Rebuilding Compromised Teeth

In many cases these badly broken down teeth will require a foundational filling to rebuild them followed by a crown to prevent further fracture and restore their structural strength.

However, working on such compromised teeth can have consequences. With the nerve already in decline and its long-term survival very much in the balance, the simple act of working on the tooth may be enough to hasten the demise of the nerve. This does not mean that we should avoid working on such teeth since that could have far more serious consequences – the worst case scenario being a serious fracture requiring removal of a tooth.

The purpose of any intended rebuilding work is to salvage the tooth, protect it, and keep it in a healthy functioning state.

For more information, please refer to the Restoring Teeth and Root Canal Treatment information sheets.

Compromised Teeth and Nerve Degeneration

All of these teeth have one thing in common - they will usually have some level of nerve degeneration. Because the pulp or 'nerve' is contained in a closed chamber in the centre of the tooth, it is always difficult to accurately assess its health status.

In the early stages of nerve degeneration the most common symptom is cold sensitivity but as the deterioration progresses this usually changes to heat sensitivity and the tooth normally becomes tender to bite on. Eventually a definite tooth-ache will develop that signifies that the nerve is irreversibly damaged and badly infected. It is normally not until this advanced stage when an abscess begins to form in the surrounding bone, that it is possible to confirm the diagnosis with an x-ray.

In some cases the nerve can die 'quietly' without you noticing any symptoms and progress to having a low-grade abscess in the bone.

Understanding the Risks

It is important to understand and accept that there are inherent risks with working on such teeth so as not to be disappointed when problems do occasionally arise.

If left untreated, the nerves in such teeth will almost certainly die at some point in the future. Generally there is a far greater chance of keeping the nerve alive by rebuilding and protecting the teeth. If the nerve does die the tooth can usually still be saved with root **canal treatment**.

The good news is that the 'state of the art' bonding technology that we use in restoring your teeth seals the cavity very tightly and ensures that there is much less post-operative sensitivity than in the past. Bonded fillings are also much kinder to the tooth/nerve and they significantly improve the chance of keeping the nerve in a healthy state.