

PULPECTOMY/PULPOTOMY

A **pulpectomy** is a dental procedure in which the entire nerve (portion in the crown and root of the tooth) is completely removed. A pulpectomy is necessary in instances when inflammation, infection, or degenerative changes have progressed into the root of a tooth. Damage to the nerve becomes evident when a pocket of pus (abscess) forms on the gum tissue near the tip of the tooth root, or a radiograph reveals root resorption. The procedure for a pulpectomy is complete removal of the nerve, reshaping and disinfecting of the canal(s), followed by placement of a medicament and crown. The only alternative to a pulpectomy is extraction of the tooth. Although initially cheaper, extraction generally requires further treatment including a space maintainer to avoid shifting of the teeth.

A **pulpotomy** is a common dental procedure in which the dental pulp or top portion of the nerve is removed and a special medicine is placed. A pulpotomy is necessary in instances where the pulp of a tooth has been exposed or compromised most commonly associated with decay or trauma. The advantage of a pulpotomy is the removal of the diseased/exposed portion while preserving the remaining healthy nerve tissue in the root, allowing the tooth to be maintained until the permanent tooth erupts. The remaining portion of healthy nerve tissue is then protected by placement of an antibacterial medicament and a crown. The only alternatives to a pulpotomy are 1) pulpectomy or 2) extraction of the tooth with proper space maintenance.

Instructions for after care (See Care of SSC or Resin Crown)