

# Single Tooth Alternatives to Extraction

## Treatment alternatives

After a tooth has been seriously damaged by decay, a fracture, or periodontal disease, your choices are limited.

Some alternatives might be

- ❖ saving a tooth with root canal therapy and a crown.
- ❖ saving a tooth with a surgical procedure, such as root amputation or bone grafting.
- ❖ delaying treatment.
- ❖ removing a tooth that cannot be saved.

## Saving the tooth

Sometimes, root canal therapy and a crown can restore a tooth that is broken down by severe decay, has an infected nerve, or has a crack that has not yet extended through the root.

Other times, surgery is the answer for teeth that can be saved. Root amputation can be an option for removing an infected or damaged tooth root. In some cases of severe periodontal disease, bone grafting, along with other treatments, may save a tooth that is infected and loose.



Root amputation

Bone graft



Tooth with severe decay must be removed

## Delaying treatment

Delaying treatment is a risky alternative because the problem will only get worse. If bone has been lost around the tooth, you'll lose more bone. If the tooth has an untreated crack, the crack can grow and break the tooth, leading to pain and possibly infection. If the tooth is decayed, the decay will continue to advance as well, and allow bacteria to infect the nerve and jawbone. Delaying treatment also can let infection spread to other teeth, your jaw, and the rest of your body. In some cases, your life can be threatened by infections in the jaw.

## Removing the tooth

Sometimes the damage to a tooth is so extensive that the tooth cannot be saved. If this is the case with your tooth, we will recommend an extraction to help you maintain your oral and overall health.

If we must remove a tooth, we often recommend replacing it to preserve the jawbone and stabilize your bite. There are a variety of options for replacing teeth, so we'll talk with you about the best ones for your situation.