

CHAPTER ONE

THE CASE *Against Root Canal Treatment*



Endangering the Body to “Save Your Smile”

According to the official website of the American Association of Endodontists, the goal of a root canal treatment is to “relieve your tooth pain and save your smile.” The same website goes on to explain the procedure:

“Endodontic [root canal] treatment treats the inside of the tooth. Endodontic treatment is necessary when the pulp becomes inflamed or infected. The inflammation or infection can have a variety of causes: deep decay, repeated dental procedures on the tooth, faulty crowns, or a crack or chip in the tooth. In addition, trauma to a tooth may cause pulp damage even if the tooth has no visible chips or cracks. If pulp inflammation or infection is left untreated, it can cause pain or lead to an abscess.”

“How does endodontic treatment save the tooth?

During root canal treatment, the inflamed or infected pulp is removed and the inside of the tooth is carefully cleaned and disinfected, then filled and sealed with a rubber-like material called gutta-percha. Afterwards, the tooth is restored with a crown or filling for protection. After restoration, the tooth continues to function like any other tooth.”¹

The goal seems noble and innocent enough. It’s all good, right?

On the face of it, a tooth has been “saved,” but there’s a devil in the details. A previously infected tooth that now maintains a beautiful smile and is without pain, in their words “saved,” does not mean that the tooth is necessarily safe. Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that virtually all root canal-treated teeth are still infected and slowly and continually leak disease-causing pathogens and toxins into the rest of the body as long as they remain in the mouth.

Removing the pain-sensing nerves from a tooth and blocking all access to the infection-fighting immune system does not “cure” the tooth any more than a local anesthetic “cures” a painful boil. The pain has been resolved, but nothing has been done to cure the underlying infection. Ignorance may be

bliss... until a stroke, heart attack, dementia, arthritis, or cancer shatters the blissful calm.

Based on the data that is being collected and published now, the health impact of root canal-treated teeth is staggering. According to industry statistics, over 25 million root canal procedures (endodontic treatments) are performed in the United States every year. Recent research would indicate that the secondary health cost as a result of these procedures is many times greater than the cost of the procedures themselves. And, of course, that's only the financial impact of these procedures. The human price is much steeper.

It should be understood from the beginning that it is the root canal treatment procedure, and this treatment alone, that is being brought into question. Nothing in this book is intended to state or imply malpractice or intended harm by those who perform this treatment. The vast majority of these professionals are sincere, hard-working, conscientious, and very interested in the health of their patients. These men and women are only doing what they have been taught to do. They are simply doing a pro-

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cedure they believe to be beneficial, and they are asserting what they have been taught to believe.

On the other hand, materials and websites that promote endodontic treatment often claim that there are no scientific grounds for concern about the safety of such therapies. That is simply not true, and it is grossly irresponsible. Recent scientific evidence will be presented to show that the infection and toxins that remain in virtually all root canal-treated teeth are intimately linked with

- ✓ Alzheimer's disease (onset/progression)
- ✓ Ankylosing spondylitis
- ✓ Asthma (worsening and increased bronchial inflammation)
- ✓ Birth problems (low birth weights, premature birth, lower maternal hemoglobin levels)
- ✓ Cancer (of the lung, kidney, pancreas, and blood)
- ✓ Cardiac calcification
- ✓ Cerebrovascular disease
- ✓ Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and its worsening
- ✓ Coronary heart disease (CHD)
- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Endothelial dysfunction
- ✓ Epilepsy (increased seizure severity)

- ✓ Hearing loss (sudden sensorineural)
- ✓ High blood pressure (hypertension and increased mortality from hypertension)
- ✓ Increased serum cholesterol and LDL levels
- ✓ Inflammatory bowel disease
- ✓ Kidney disease
- ✓ Metabolic syndrome (leading to increased CHD)
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Osteoporosis (stimulation of osteoclastic activity)
- ✓ Pneumonia and other lung infections
- ✓ Preeclampsia (increased risk)
- ✓ Psoriasis
- ✓ Rheumatoid arthritis
- ✓ Septic pulmonary embolism
- ✓ Stroke (increased risk and greater neurological deficit)
- ✓ Systemic lupus erythematosus and its worsening
- ✓ Vascular disease (such as Buerger's disease and varicose veins)
- ✓ Critical vitamin deficiencies (C and D)

Additionally, anatomical evidence will show that the goal of root canal treatment, namely to “save” the tooth by removing the infection (sterilization) and to create a bacteria-tight seal to prevent

re-infection and leakage, is essentially impossible in both theory and execution. In the coming chapters scientific studies will be used to demonstrate that

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virtually all root canal-treated teeth are, in fact, infected and leaking.

Endodontic proponents assert that the healthy immune system is capable of handling any infectious bacteria remaining after the root canal treatment in a matter of minutes. The fallacy of this notion will be fully exposed with scientific examples and precedent. Unfortunately, it's not just pathogens that present

the danger. The microbes in the oxygen-starved environment of a root canal-treated tooth produce exotoxins that are biologically highly toxic and virtually untouchable by the immune system.

Some have questioned the actual danger of endodontic treatment simply by noting that if the claims were true, people would be falling dead all around us from root canal-treated teeth.

The reality is that millions **are** dying from heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, and dementia. Many others **are** suffering with arthritis,

obesity, metabolic syndrome, and high blood pressure. And in those cases where root canal-treated teeth have been the cause of the death and suffering, the typically pain-free treated teeth just sit in the mouth quietly exporting their pathogens and toxins—day after day, year after year—often with little or no sign of harmful activity unless actively investigated with clinical evaluation and laboratory testing.

For sure, not all who are dying or suffering are doing so because of root canal-treated teeth. But current evidence says some people certainly are. Root canal-treated teeth increase the risk of disease, period. Few are acknowledging this risk.

Serious warnings are in order. Patients must be informed of the documented risks of root canal treatment and offered the alternatives to root canal procedures. Simply put, there must be a full informed consent offered patients contemplating this procedure. Dentists cannot selectively omit peer-reviewed published research data describing the systemic health risks of root canal-treated teeth in

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talking with patients while assuring them that the root canal treatment is a completely harmless procedure. The chapters ahead present the evidence, sound the warning, state the risks, and present the alternatives.