

Re: Root Canal imminent....is a crown mandatory?

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- *From:* Steven Bornfeld <dentaltwinmung@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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madrox99@xxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

Greetings,

How are you all? If you don't mind I thought I'd drop in and get a feel of what to expect from an upcoming root canal procedure.

I just signed up for both a Dental Plan and Dental Insurance. I have piercing pain in my upper left tooth. I already went for the preliminary checkup and it looks like I'll need a root canal.

I'm a recent college graduate, and I have no family in the USA so I'm not exactly rich.

Now the Dental Insurance won't cover the canal because there is a 4 month waiting period. I'll get some sort of discount on the plan.

My concerns are as follows:

- 1) I'm nervous of the cost. Reading up on google archives indicate I should expect to pay *at least* \$2,000 for the total procedure, even with the plan.
- 2) Is a crown always necessary, and if so, is it necessary immediately after a root canal or can it be held off 6 months or so?
- 3) Given my financial situation, is a prefabricated crown (stainless steel) a viable option?

I'm a little nervous, more from the impending financial hit I might take, as opposed to the drilling and procedure of the canal itself :)

Regards,

I don't know what "plan" or "insurance" you have. Most insurance plans covering procedures on the basis of UCR (usual, customary and reasonable) will pay for root canals at 80% of UCR (note that some UCR schedules seem to have been discovered in a time capsule from the time of Ramses II)—some will pay less.

Re: Root Canal imminent....is a crown mandatory?

You haven't said what tooth you are dealing with, nor why the tooth needs root canal. Around these parts (Brooklyn, NY) the fee for an endodontist for an average molar tooth is in the \$1000–\$1200 range. Less complicated teeth or those done by a generalist will likely be less.

The majority of teeth requiring root canal need to be crowned, or at least a restoration that covers the chewing surface. This is to minimize the chances of cracking. Fees for crowns vary widely, but \$1K is a pretty fair guess of an average nationwide. A post and/or core may be needed as well. Given this, a total fee of \$2000–\$2500 might be right; out of pocket fees of \$2000 indicate you're not getting much help from your plan, and if you're paying for this I can't see why from this example.

It is not unusual for a patient not to be able to crown a tooth immediately. In this situation (and esp. if I know the patient can be trusted to return) I will sometimes restore the tooth with a filling after shortening the tooth (therefore removing the tooth from most biting forces) as long as they know the tooth **MUST** be restored more definitively within a reasonable period of time (maybe a year). There are few common scenarios in my office more disheartening than having a patient go through a root canal, and next year having to extract the tooth because it has cracked or rotted.

Steve

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