

Recent bad dental experience

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Last month an amalgum filling fell out of one of my molars and I saw a dentist about having it replaced. The dentist indicated that too much of the tooth was missing and he advised me to have a root canal performed. He said this was preferable to having the tooth extracted, in his opinion.

At that time I had no idea of the controversy regarding root canals (and this post is not actually focused on the root canal itself) but, especially due to the strong pain and discomfort I had following the procedure I decided to do some research about them.

In short, my research convinced me that the best course of action would be to have the tooth in question extracted, and this was done two days after the root canal by a dentist who does not use a digital X-ray system. A traditional X-ray was taken. I'd mentioned the issue of digital vs traditional dental X-rays to him and he vehemently denied what the original dentist had told me about digital radiography, namely, that it results in 80% - 90% less radiation exposure.

During the extraction the dentist said the tooth broke up into many pieces. However, he nevertheless did give the extracted tooth to me after the procedure. In fact, it was actually mostly intact (keeping in mind that it had not been whole to begin with after the filling had fallen out) except for one of the roots being missing.

The site of the extracted tooth would have been quite sore just from the root canal alone, and I clearly understood that the subsequent extraction wouldn't help in regard to the pain issue. I was put on a regimen of antibiotics.

After eating something days after the extraction, and while away from home, I had wrapped a layer of a paper napkin around my clean index finger to feel if there was any food material in the socket. To my surprise, I felt a small, hard, loose fragment, which I was able to fish out of the socket with my finger.

About a week later, after day after day of taking 800 mg Ibruprophen pills (a fairly strong dosage, I'm led to believe) for the pain, I

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decided I really needed to see the dentist who'd extracted the tooth as I suspected there was another, inaccessible fragment of the extracted tooth remaining in the socket.

The dentist did what I perceived as a cursory visual inspection of the site of the extraction and announced that it was healing well, there was no dry socket. He did not order an X-ray to be taken during this follow-up visit. I asked if there might be a fragment of the extracted tooth still remaining in the socket and he indicated no. He did mention about an "edge" of something possibly irritating the area, but never mentioned anything whatsoever about an actual root tip still being in the site of the extraction. He said that very often a small fragment of an extracted tooth will remain in the site but eventually rises (as with the fragment I fished out with my finger) naturally or else is dissolved. He ended the visit by saying to me, with obvious annoyance, "You have concerns, concerns, concerns ... " and prescribed another course of antibiotics.

I thought to myself, "Well, this guy's a trained professional and he says it looks fine to him and there's no fragment causing my great pain, so I should just accept what he says."

Another week went by during which I had constant serious pain which was only temporarily, and not even fully, relieved by taking 800 mg Ibruprophen pills. I could actually feel the painful site physically throbbing at times.

I then contacted the original dentist (the one who'd referred me for the root canal) and requested an appointment. He took a digital X-ray and indicated that a good-sized piece of one root was still in the socket, and indeed it's very clearly visible on the upper copies of the radiograph that I was given. I was given a referral to an oral surgeon, who -- one day short of three weeks after the original extraction was performed -- then extracted the 1 and 1/10th cm root tip that had been left in my mouth when the original extraction was done. The oral surgeon, upon extracting the root tip, exclaimed, "Wow, that's quite a chunk!"

Both the original dentist, as well as the oral surgeon, indicated bewilderment at how the extracting dentist had not seen this remaining piece of root.

In sum, I suffered for one day shy of three full weeks with terrible pain 24/7 that was only partially relieved by strong painkillers.

What do folks here make of this?

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