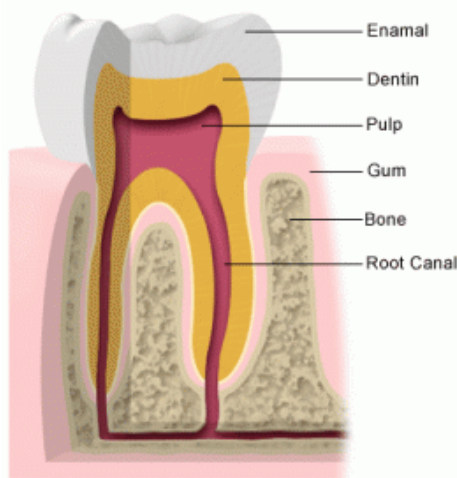


What is a Pulpotomy Procedure?



By definition a pulpotomy is the surgical removal of an inflamed pulp chamber due to the invasion of some ugly bacteria. It's a complicated word for a very common procedure in pediatric dentistry. The success rate is high and it is also something which can be done in conjunction with other procedures if needed, most usually a prefabricated stainless steel crown.

As a parent or caregiver it is important to know that inflammations in the pulp chamber does occur in young children affecting their baby teeth. Your child may appear grumpy or if they are old enough, complain their tooth hurts. It is necessary to address this inflammation to prevent infection and to save the tooth itself. If the soft tissue surrounding the tooth has swollen or you have seen any signs of abscess, such as puss, it may be too late for a pulpotomy and extraction is indicated.

How Does A Pulp Tissue Develop Inflammation?

When a cavity gets extremely deep, it can get too close to the pulp of the tooth or even into the pulp. The tissue then gets irritated and swollen, resulting in a feeling similar to that of a toothache. If this inflammation goes on without any treatment, an abscess can form, and extraction is indicated.

A Pulpotomy In Baby Molars

In baby teeth, the purpose of a pulpotomy is to try to save the tooth as long as possible or until the roots dissolve and the tooth falls out on its own. The decay and tissue within the pulp chamber is removed. The root canals are not accessed. Pulpotomies may buy some time, but they cannot save an already abscessed tooth. However, it can save a badly decayed baby tooth.

The Pulpotomy Procedure

The procedure includes removing the nerve and tissue in the crown (the part of the tooth nearest the gum line) and a medicated filling material is placed inside the chamber. This helps keep the nerve tissue within the root canals intact. Following treatment, the tooth needs to be restored. Most often a prefabricated stainless steel crown is used for final restoration.

Benefits Of A Pulpotomy

- It may prevent unnecessary loss of teeth due to a possible infection.
- By saving a baby tooth, the space is maintained for the adult tooth to erupt.
- It may give a developing permanent tooth a chance to fully develop

The success of the procedure depends on the extent of the decay and extent of the inflammation. The primary goal of a pulpotomy is to prolong the life of the baby tooth so the developing adult tooth has time to develop. Staying in tuned with your child's dental habits and health can help you in identifying a problem early.

Image Borrowed from <http://pediatricdentistryofglensfalls.com/what-is-a-pulpotomy-procedure/> and edited by Dr. Gordon 7/27/15.