



# GREAT SMILES

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY & ORTHODONTICS

828.274.9220 | GreatSmiles.com

## PULP THERAPY

Pulp therapy is the treatment of infected nerves and blood vessels in teeth. Pulp therapy generally becomes necessary for two reasons: either as a result of extensive tooth decay (dental caries); or as the result of tooth injury.

### Why Pulp Therapy is Important

Failure to provide the necessary pulp therapy could result in your child experiencing pain, infection, swelling, or loss of the root. With the proper treatment, the tooth can be preserved for chewing food and maintaining proper space for permanent teeth, as well as helping your child to preserve a healthy, happy smile.

### Treatment of Tooth Requiring a Pulpotomy

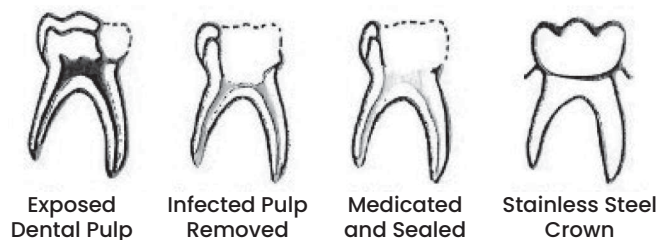
There are a number of ways your doctor may suggest to treat these various conditions. For example, in the case of a tooth with decay, the goal is to keep the primary tooth until it is ready naturally to come out (exfoliate) and be replaced by the permanent tooth. Typically, back primary teeth are maintained in the mouth until 10 or 12 years of age. Proper treatment will enable the primary tooth to hold the necessary arch space for permanent teeth and help to prevent the development of future bite problems. Proper treatment will also help your child to continue to chew food and speak as usual.

To prepare the tooth for pulp therapy, your doctor will numb the tooth or use other methods to prevent your child from experiencing discomfort during treatment.

Following the preparation of the tooth, pulp therapy may be as simple as the placement of a medicine within the cavity before filling or restoring the tooth, or it might require removal of some or all of the pulp tissue in the crown or roots of the tooth. Your doctor will discuss various treatment options and details with you, depending upon the extent of your child's individual circumstances.

### Pulp Therapy Success

The success of pulp therapy depends on the duration and severity of the infection. As a general rule, the earlier an infected tooth is treated, the more likely the treatment will be a success. Your doctor will discuss these factors with you to help you to decide on the correct treatment for your child.



## **STAINLESS STEEL CROWNS**

When decay has destroyed a tooth to the extent that there is little support for a filling, a nerve treatment has to be performed, it is best to surround the tooth with a crown. Otherwise, the remaining portion of the severely weakened tooth may fracture, necessitating extraction. Stainless steel is used to fix back teeth and occasionally front teeth where resin or tooth colored filling is not easily retained.

To avoid the cost and time of replacement, please avoid sticky foods such as hard candy, caramel, and taffy.

The crowned tooth will usually fall out normally when the permanent successor is ready to come in.

## **PULPOTOMY (PARTIAL NERVE REMOVAL)**

Due to the bacterial involvement of the pulp (nerve) chamber of your child's decayed tooth, it will be necessary to remove the nerve in the pulp chamber (crown) of the tooth and place a medicated base or liner. When the local anesthesia wears off, your child may complain of some discomfort at first. This pain can usually be relieved by some Motrin or Tylenol.

The success of a partial nerve treatment or pulpotomy depends on the severity of the infection and the body's reaction to the infection and subsequent treatment. If the pulpotomy is not performed or fails, the tooth may abscess. An abscessed primary tooth will usually be extracted (removed) and a space maintainer will be placed to hold the space for its permanent successor.

A tooth may abscess with or without pain, therefore it is recommended that regular six-month checkups be made in order to keep the teeth under constant observation.