

# Pulpitis

## When a tooth is injured

Any time the pulp of a tooth has been injured or irritated, there is a possibility that it may become swollen and painful. This inflammation is called pulpitis. Treating the condition will relieve discomfort and restore the health of your mouth.

## Symptoms of pulpitis

You may realize that you have an inflamed tooth when—

- ❖ the tooth is sensitive to hot, cold, or pressure.
- ❖ the tooth hurts with biting.
- ❖ there is throbbing tooth pain.
- ❖ the area is swollen.
- ❖ the tooth is loose .
- ❖ you have a bad taste in your mouth.

You may also be unaware of the problem because there are no symptoms at all.



*Tapping the tooth*



*Root canal*



*Inflamed pulp*

## Causes of pulpitis

The tooth pulp is a soft tissue made up of nerves and blood vessels. It is contained in the pulp chamber that extends from the middle of the tooth down through the tooth roots.

The pulp can become inflamed for a number of reasons. Occasionally, placing a filling, crown, or other restoration close to the pulp can cause inflammation. Other times, the pulp may become inflamed due to an injury. In both these cases, the pulp may calm down on its own, but sometimes it can die or become infected.

The pulp also can become infected when tooth decay destroys the outer layers of the tooth and allows bacteria to invade the pulp layer. Sometimes the condition occurs for no apparent reason.

## Diagnosis and treatment

To select the best treatment, we do a thorough examination. The examination often includes x-rays and sometimes includes checking the health of the pulp with a pulp tester. We may also apply heat or cold, tap lightly on the tooth to see if it is sensitive, look for changes in the tooth's color, or press gently on the gums next to the tooth to check for pain.

If the pulp is mildly inflamed, we may recommend treatments to ease any discomfort and help the tooth heal.

If the pulp cannot heal itself or is infected, we recommend root canal therapy to remove the infection and save the tooth.