

Root Canals, Breast Cancer, and Your Health **by Alexander Mostovoy, HD, DHMS, BCCT**

For years, a debate has brewed between those, who are proponents of root canals, and those, who see root canals as a potential health threat. Current convention is to save a tooth at any cost. It does not, however, consider the logic of leaving a dead, filled tooth inside the body. If this scenario involved any other part of the body, say your hand, it would not even be debated. But when it comes to teeth, the same logic that prevails in other body parts usually disappears.

A root canal is a dental operation, where the pulp of a tooth is cleared out. The resulting cavity is disinfected and then filled. Dental pulp, however, is necessary to nourish and hydrate tooth structure, and to provide hot and cold feelings in teeth. In effect, the dentist severs the nerve connection, ensuring there is no more pain, and then seals off the healthy blood supply to the area. As a result, with a root canal, two of the most important components of wellness are removed: pain receptors and blood supply.

Pain acts as a warning system that something is wrong. Unless the region becomes abscessed, usually over a longer period of time, we are completely unaware that something is going on. When a patient has no symptoms of pain or discomfort, the assumption is that all is well. If an infection in the area does develop, we have no way of knowing this, as the pain receptors in that area have been removed. If an abscess develops, it will be taken care of – usually as an emergency – but by then, infection could have been setting in for ages and could have already created other health issues. Chronic inflammation has been accepted as “the silent killer” that leads to chronic disease, heart disease, and cancer. Root canals are inherently susceptible to infection and inflammation.

Blood supply is necessary to nourish and revitalize the tooth and surrounding tissue. By removing the blood supply and sealing the area, proper oxygenation, important in healing, is hindered. What we have now is a dead root, without a blood supply, that is hermetically sealed. These factors create an environment that promotes bacterial and microbial growth that proliferates without the usual checks and balances of pain.

Under such conditions, organisms continue to grow and multiply inside the cavity and create waste by-products. The waste by-products, in turn, have no place to escape to, but move deeper into the tissue, eventually reaching the blood supply. These waste by-products are believed to be neurotoxic. In other words, they affect our nervous system, the brain, and even our genes. It is also very possible that these same neurotoxins interfere with and disable the proper functioning of the tumor suppression gene. The tumor suppression gene has a complex mechanism; however, if it is turned off, our own defense mechanism is now compromised in the fight against cancer.

Over the years at our clinic, we have imaged thousands of women using infrared thermography. In many cases, we have clearly seen cases of inflammation in the dental

area using this heat sensing technology. Many of these cases are caused by a low-grade infection and inflammation and have, through further testing, been attributed to dental or oral issues, such as issues related to root-canal treated teeth. Invariably, some cases are very subtle, even asymptomatic for many years, but these cases slowly and continuously affect peoples' health. With thermographic imaging, we can identify areas of suspected inflammation and infection because they present with heat. Once an area of concern is identified, it needs further investigation and resolution. People living with a chronic source of infection and inflammation will eventually find that their immunity is affected. In some cases, this chronic inflammation and infection will actually promote the growth of malignancy. The natural defense mechanism to fight malignant cells is impaired since their immune system is busy dealing with inflammation that has no chance of resolving on its own. The only way this problem can be resolved is by identifying and removing the cause. The infected area has to be properly dealt with before the body can be restored to health.

Consider the following case:

Years ago, a woman came in for her breast thermography evaluation. In some cases, when a thermography exam is rated equivocal, or high risk, we ask the patient to follow up with an additional facial/dental thermography exam, especially if we see something suspicious. This woman had a facial/dental thermography examination, which revealed an area of heat that corresponded directly to her root canal. She was advised to seek additional help from her dentist to investigate further and address the problem. Two years went by, and she continued with annual follow-up breast thermography and facial/dental examinations. It was evident that her breast had become more at risk while the area of concern over her root canal remained abnormally hot, pointing to an increasing level of inflammation.

The woman never followed up with her dentist and instead decided to treat herself with natural anti-inflammatory products. This type of dental problem could not be resolved this way. For the body to heal, removal of inflammatory agents or, minimally, creation of some form of drainage is needed. But remember, in a root canal procedure, these areas are sealed. An analogy can be made to having a splinter in one's hand. One can take all sorts of substances to reduce the swelling and inflammation produced by the foreign body in the hand, but these remedies will not work until after the splinter is removed. Only then does the swelling and inflammation become reduced. This analogy represents a case where physical intervention is perfectly warranted, and even required.

Despite multiple research studies that link root-canal treated teeth to cancer and other chronic disease, the majority of people, even health care professionals, do not pay enough attention to dental health. Remember that, in the body, the mouth is the largest cavity that is continuously exposed to outside influences and the environment. When was the last time your doctor asked you about your dental health? If the answer is "never", perhaps it's time to re-evaluate your health issues and consider this question. Take the initiative and investigate. It can help in restoring your health.

Dr. Mostovoy is recognized as a leading authority on the application of clinical thermography. Since 1999, he has pioneered the use of Infrared Medical Thermography in his clinic in Toronto with a special interest in breast thermography and women's health. He is clinic director of Thermography Clinic Inc., and a founder and CEO of a growing company that helps integrate thermography into clinical practices around the world. He can be reached at 416.636.2916 or by email info@thermographyclinic.com