

ABC of dentistry

Abutment

Usually a tooth or root used for support, stabilization or anchorage for either a fixed or removable denture or other device e.g. an implant, to support against lateral or horizontal thrust.

Acid Etching

Acid etching is the selective dissolution of a surface (usually the tooth enamel) by a dilute acid.

In the case of the tooth surface, this causes demineralisation of the enamel leaving a clean and more mechanically retentive surface layer, thereby improving the bonding to filling materials.

The acid used is generally 30 to 50% Phosphoric acid.

Apicectomy

It is a surgical procedure to remove the tip or end of the root of a tooth lying in the bone of the jaws, through an opening made in the buccal (cheek side) or palatal side of the tooth. At the same time, tissue from around the apex or end of the root may be removed to control a disease process or to facilitate healing.

The procedure is usually associated with root canal treatment either during the procedure, or more often afterwards, if an earlier root canal treatment has not healed satisfactorily.

The dentist or surgeon may also carry out a retrograde, i.e. a filling placed in the end of the remaining portion of the root to seal the root canal at the same time.

You will normally need to have a number of x-rays associated with this

treatment. These are necessary to control and check the success of the procedure. After the surgery, you may notice some swelling around the area, as the wound heals. Antibiotics are sometimes prescribed to help the healing and prevent further infection.

Generally this procedure is carried out by a specialist in Endodontics (root canal treatment) and then only if it is absolutely not possible to re-root treat the tooth.

Autoclave

This is a type of machine which sterilizes instruments using steam and pressure. It consists of an hermetically closed container in which the temperature of electrically heated water is allowed to rise to at least 121°C (250 °F) at which all living organisms are killed, with a parallel increase in steam pressure to 15 psi.

Instruments have to be cleaned thoroughly before sterilization. In this practice this is done by immersing the instruments in a detergent solution in an ultrasonic bath for 15 minutes first.

After the instruments are sterilised in the autoclave, they are cooled, packed into trays and placed in sealed packages.

Instruments have to be re-sterilised every 21 days if they have not been used. The practice has a monitoring system in place to ensure that this happens. Regularly used instruments are sterilised every day or so, the less commonly used ones are redone once every 3 weeks.