



# Alternatives to Single Tooth Extraction

For your dental health.

## What are your choices for treating a problem tooth?

When you're thinking about how to treat a problem tooth, you have three options:

- Remove it
- Save it
- Delay treatment

## Removing a tooth

Sometimes, you may not have an alternative, and your tooth may have to be removed.

It's important to replace a tooth after it's been extracted. A missing tooth can set off a chain reaction resulting in many new problems. When a tooth is lost, the biting force changes on the teeth next to the space, and they begin to shift, and when a tooth no longer has anything to chew against, it can begin to extrude out of its socket. As your bite changes, your jaw joint may be damaged. And it's much harder to clean teeth that have shifted, so harmful plaque and tartar can accumulate, causing cavities and periodontal disease.



*Tooth must be removed*



*Teeth need each other for support*

## Saving a tooth

If a tooth is healthy enough to be saved, the alternatives to having it removed may be having root canal therapy and a crown, or using surgical procedures such as bone grafting or root amputation.



*Root canal therapy*

## Delaying treatment

Delaying treatment is a risky alternative because the problem will only get worse. If the tooth has a cavity, it will get deeper and get into the nerve. If there's bone loss around the tooth, you'll lose more bone, and if the damage has gone too far, and the tooth has to be removed, then delaying treatment lets the infection spread to other teeth, or, worse yet, to the rest of your body. Your life can even be threatened by infections in the jaw.