

Endodontic Abscess

An endodontic abscess forms at the root tip

An endodontic abscess is a pocket of pus that forms in the jawbone at the tip of a tooth root.

An endodontic abscess is painful and can lead to much more serious conditions, but with prompt treatment, we can help you maintain a healthy mouth and body.

Symptoms of an endodontic abscess

You may realize that you have an endodontic abscess when—

- ❖ the tooth hurts when you tap or bite on it.
- ❖ you have a bad taste in your mouth.
- ❖ you experience pain and swelling.

It is also possible that you can have an endodontic abscess and experience no symptoms at all.

The causes of an endodontic abscess

An endodontic abscess is caused by an infection of the pulp layer of the tooth. It becomes infected when bacteria, which are always present in the mouth, invade the pulp through deep cavities, a fractured or broken tooth, or an injury to the tooth. In some cases, there is no apparent reason.



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The infection can then spread from the pulp chamber, down the root canals, through the tip of the root, and into the jawbone, where the pus builds up and creates a hole in the bone. This is the abscess.

The abscess creates pressure inside the bone and on the ligaments surrounding the tooth, and this can cause excruciating pain. Sometimes, the abscess drains near the infected tooth, forming a gumboil.

Diagnosis and treatment

It is important to treat an endodontic abscess because, if left untreated, the abscess can damage the adjacent soft tissue, lead to bone loss, be a continuing source of infection that drags down your immune system, and even be life-threatening.

To find an endodontic abscess, we perform a thorough examination, including x-rays. On the x-ray above, you can see a dark area at the root tip, which indicates an endodontic abscess. We may also use an electric pulp tester to determine whether the pulp is inflamed or infected.

An infected tooth will never heal on its own, so we remove the infection with **root canal therapy**, which allows the abscess to heal. Occasionally, however, the infection continues to grow after treatment. In that case, we may **retreat the tooth with root canal therapy** or use a minor surgical procedure to stop the infection and restore the health of your tooth.