

DURING THE LATE 18TH CENTURY, ROOT CANALS AS WE KNOW THEM TODAY, DID NOT EXIST. TOOTHACHES WERE COMMON AND TYPICALLY THE SOLUTION WAS TO REMOVE THE BAD TOOTH.

SOME DENTISTS OF THAT TIME TRIED TO SAVE TEETH BY CAUTERIZING THE PULP OR TREATING THE ABSCESED TOOTH WITH LEECHES. IF THOSE TREATMENTS FAILED, THE DENTIST MAY HAVE TRIED TO TRANSPLANT A TOOTH FROM ONE PERSON'S MOUTH TO ANOTHER'S.

BY THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, DENTISTS BEGAN USING MATERIALS SUCH AS ORANGE WOOD OR GOLD TO FILL ROOT CANAL SPACE. PASTES ALSO BEGAN TO BE USED AS FILLINGS. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THE CHEMICALS FOUND IN THESE EARLY PASTES WERE IRRITATING.

BY THE 20TH CENTURY, DENTISTS BEGAN USING X-RAYS TO DETERMINE CANAL LENGTH, AND AN EFFECTIVE SEALER CEMENT FOR THE ROOT CANAL WAS DEVELOPED.

TODAY, WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY, 95 PERCENT OF ROOT CANALS ARE SUCCESSFUL. MUCH RESEARCH IS BEING DONE, AND NEW MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES WILL ALLOW FOR FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENT TREATMENT.

FOR THE ADA DENTAL MINUTE, I'M DR. MARIA LOPEZ HOWELL.

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