

When is an indirect pulp treatment performed?

Indirect pulp treatment is an option when:

- A tooth has a deep cavity.
- The patient has not reported any spontaneous (or night) pain, swelling or any other symptoms.
- An X-ray shows that a tooth has decay that has not yet reached the pulp.

What is an indirect pulp treatment?

Indirect pulp treatment (IPT) is a procedure that may be done when a tooth has a cavity that is very close to the pulp (nerve) of the tooth. The pulp is the soft tissue inside the tooth where nerves and blood vessels pass through. In order to maintain the tooth's vitality and avoid a pulpotomy, a bit of decay is left in the tooth. A sedative medication is placed to seal over the remaining decay. This arrests the decay and reduces chances of future infections.

Why does a child need an indirect pulp treatment?

An indirect pulp is performed to save a tooth with a cavity that is close to the pulp, and that can no longer be treated with a regular filling. When a cavity gets very deep, close to the pulp of a tooth, the pulp may become irritated and inflamed. This usually causes the "toothache" your child feels in response to stimuli such as eating, cold etc. Without treatment, the gum around tooth will likely become infected, swollen and painful.



How does a dentist determine the need for an indirect pulp treatment?

If a baby tooth has a very large cavity, or is broken, action may be needed to restore the tooth and prevent infection from spreading to surrounding tissues. After X-rays are taken, we will be able to assess the extent of the infection and recommend treatment.

Why not just pull the tooth?

Baby teeth hold space for the proper placing of the permanent teeth. If a baby tooth is lost too early, it may mean a crooked smile in the child's future.

How is an indirect pulp treatment performed?

At Little Smiles, we will start by making the patient comfortable through the injection of a local anesthetic. Most of the decay will be removed and a special dressing will be placed over any remaining decay to prevent it from later affecting the pulp. The tooth is then restored with a crown or filling in the same visit.

How long does it take to get an indirect pulp treatment?

Usually less than an hour.

What about home care?

Pain or discomfort after IPT may be treated with over-the-counter pain relievers recommended by your dentist. If swelling occurs, or if pain becomes worse, you can contact us at Little Smiles right away.