

Healthy Northern New Jersey

# Recipe for a Healthy Mouth

Root canals once had a bad rap. Thanks to advances in pain management—and the tireless work of the **American Association of Endodontists**—they're now a routine procedure that saves teeth and helps patients enjoy eating again.



**“S**ome people eat to live, and some live to eat,” says Craig Hirschberg, D.D.S., president of the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) and self-proclaimed foodie. “Either way, people who suffer from dental pain, infection, or swelling cannot chew food properly,” which compromises their health and ability to enjoy meals.

Basic oral hygiene—brushing and flossing twice daily as well as scheduling dental checkups every six months—goes a long way toward maintaining a healthy mouth, says Dr. Hirschberg. Still, toothaches happen. That’s when most patients turn to an endodontist, a dentist and root canal specialist with extensive training in advanced pain control and managing dental trauma.

Though some patients need the procedure after tooth injuries or advanced gum disease sets in, most root canals are the “cumulative

effect of decay and repeated restorative procedures,” notes Dr. Hirschberg. Patients used to need referrals to see endodontists; today, they can visit the AAE’s website and refer themselves.

Ultimately, the AAE seeks to accomplish two goals. First, the 8,000-plus member organization works to dispel the misconception that root canals must be painful. “Thanks to advances in pain management, today’s procedure is not your grandmother’s root canal,” says Dr. Hirschberg. “It does not need to be dreaded.” Second, the AAE emphasizes the importance of saving natural teeth.

By promoting root canals for damaged teeth instead of waiting until extraction is the only option, endodontists can help people live healthier lives and truly enjoy mealtime again. After all, says Dr. Hirschberg, “Even as a person who makes killer protein shakes, I still don’t want all my food to have to go through the Vitamix.”



[findmyendodontist.com](http://findmyendodontist.com)



## Dr. Hirschberg's Seafood Pasta

### Ingredients:

1.5 pounds fresh shellfish (whole, cleaned, deveined shrimp and/or scallops)

8 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced

1 medium shallot, chopped

1 cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped

½ tablespoon dried oregano

2 bay leaves

Fresh ground black pepper

Kosher salt

Generous pinch saffron threads

28 oz. can whole San Marzano tomatoes, broken into pieces

2 cups fish stock

½ cup dry white wine

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

¾ pound quality dried spaghetti or linguine

Additional olive oil for drizzling

Red chili flakes

### Directions:

1. Pour oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallot and garlic; cook until fragrant. Then add salt and pepper to taste, oregano, and tomatoes; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Next, add bay leaves, fish stock, saffron, and wine. Cook for an additional 10 minutes, until sauce is reduced by half. Add seafood to sauce, and cook until almost done.
2. In the meantime, add pasta to boiling, salted water, and cook until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 cup of pasta water. Add pasta to sauce and toss, then cook for 1 minute more. Let rest off of heat for a few minutes. (If pasta seems too “tight,” add some of the reserved pasta water).
3. Serve in warm bowls, and top with drizzled olive oil, chopped parsley, and chili flakes.