VITAL PULP THERAPY USING DIRECT PULP CAPS IN PERMANENT TEETH: AN ALTERNATIVE TO ROOT CANALS?

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The dental pulp is connective tissue that lives protected inside the hard tissues of the tooth. When this soft tissue is exposed to trauma, caries, or damage (such as tooth fracture), the tissue is at risk of infection that will eventually proceed to pain and necrosis of the pulp. In permanent teeth, the current standard of care in situations of infected pulp tissue is to proceed directly to root canal treatment. But, remember the best treatment results happen in teeth that preserve the vitality of the pulp. Lately, a potential alternative has gained clinical popularity – vital pulp therapy. Vital pulp therapy (VPT) attempts to treat the infection without the complete removal of the dental pulp tissue. The purpose of this course is to explain the clinical procedures associated with vital pulp therapy, to discuss the specific cases where vital pulp therapy should and should not be used, and to touch on the success rates reported in current research.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Understand the indications and contraindications of VPT
- Discuss the clinical materials and procedures for VPT
- Review the advances in direct pulp capping materials and the evidence-based findings of prognosis after VPT

CLINICIAN

SIERRA NUNN, DMD, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry serving as the Team Leader for Team 2 in the Comprehensive Care Clinic and seeing patients in the Faculty Practice Clinic. Dr. Nunn earned her dental degree from the University of Kentucky College Of Dentistry in 2019 and she completed a one-year post-grad training course in Endodontics at UKCD in June of 2021. She was previously a part-time faculty member at the University of Kentucky College Of Dentistry in the Division of Restorative Dentistry, Division of Endodontics, and Division of Comprehensive Care. She is the course director for the first-year Clinical Clerkships and provides coverage for the second-year pre-clinical Endodontics course. Sierra resides in Lawrenceburg, KY with her husband and three children.

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