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## **Patients alerted to impact of stress on their dental health**

On the eve of Bruxism Awareness Week (24–30 October 2011), founders of the Saving Teeth Awareness Campaign are calling for greater recognition of the impact of stress on dental health and urging those who know they are clenching or grinding to talk to their dentist about what can be done.

Bruxism is the name given to tooth grinding and it is thought to affect around 50% of the population and is on the increase. In some people, stress causes grinding and clenching of teeth and this in turn can cause cracks to develop. When a tooth is cracked, or fractured, it is susceptible to pulpal inflammation. If the pulp becomes infected, a root canal treatment may ultimately be required.

Leading Endodontic specialist, Julian Webber, says: “Root canal treatment may be an inevitability among many in the baby boomer generation with heavily filled teeth. Once a tooth has suffered decay and been filled, further deterioration over time is likely.”

He continued: “If you add stress into the mix and have people with restored teeth, clenching and grinding, they can develop a range of problems in their teeth and jaws. I can generally tell the patients who are stressed just by looking into their mouths.”

Sometimes the impact of bruxism can cause as much pain as an infected tooth. Some patients who are referred to Dr Webber’s practice, the Harley Street Centre for Endodontics, turn out **not** to need root canal treatment. The cause of the pain is the jaw muscle which has been over-worked by stress.

“With Bruxism Awareness Week nearly upon us, this is a good time to talk to your dentist about wear and tear on your teeth and how he or she can help you.”

For more information, go to [www.savingteeth.co.uk](http://www.savingteeth.co.uk)

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