

Root Canal Care: Post-Operative Instructions

Root canal treatment can take 1 to 3 appointments depending on the tooth and the reason for the root canal. It is possible to experience any of the following symptoms after any one of these appointments: sensitivity to hot and/or cold; sensitivity to pressure; and possibly swelling. In most cases the quantity and quality of discomfort will subside dramatically within the first 24-48 hours. Any sensitivity to cold, hot or even breathing air "in" may take several days to several weeks to disappear completely. Taking over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, Advil, Motrin, or Aleve usually relieves this discomfort. Tylenol has been proven not to be as effective as aspirin, etc., because it does not have the anti-inflammatory component as these other medications.

The most common complaint is tenderness to touch, bite, tapping or chewing on the tooth. It is recommended to refrain from any of the above and eat on the other side until your dentist permanently restores your tooth.

It is difficult to predict which symptoms, if any, you may experience and to what extent. In some cases, **OTC pain medication and/or Antibiotics** may be necessary.

If you experience swelling or pain that worsens after your visit, call our office; it may be necessary to schedule you an appointment and you may need antibiotics.

A temporary filling will be used to seal the tooth between visits. Sometimes it is difficult to hold this filling in place because the tooth is severely broken. If the filling comes out please call our office for an appointment to replace the filling. Leaving the tooth unfilled will lead to infection.

Be gentle on the tooth while eating, and avoid chewing on hard and sticky foods until the final restoration is placed.

During root canal treatment, the nerve, blood, and nutrient supply to the tooth are removed. This will cause the tooth to become brittle and prone to fracturing which can result in the need to extract the tooth. Eat on the other side, and avoid hard, sticky foods. In most cases, a **PERMANENT FILLING (CORE BUILDUP) AND FULL COVERAGE CROWN RESTORATION (CAP)** will be necessary to protect your tooth after the root canal is completed.

Be careful until the anesthetic (numbing) wears off. Due to the strange feeling of the anesthetic, many people will chew the inside of their lips, cheeks or tongue, which can cause serious damage.

The numbing in the upper jaw will last approximately 1 hour, and the numbing in the lower jaw will last up to 4 hours. A soft diet is recommended until the numbing wears off. Also, avoid hot drinks or foods until the numbing is gone.

The gum tissue may have been irritated during the procedure and may be sore for a few days. The site where the anesthetic injection was given may also be sore for a few days.

Please follow prescribed oral hygiene instructions-45 degree angle brushing twice a day and flossing once a day to avoid getting a cavity or gum disease around the tooth. When flossing around your temporary filling, slide the floss out between your teeth rather than snapping up between the teeth so your filling does not come out.

Follow all prescribed home care instructions exactly as directed. Success of treatment directly depends on excellent oral hygiene at home and your regular Recall visits.