

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ROOT CANAL THERAPY

First of all, congratulations, you made it through the root canal! Hopefully you had a pleasant experience, considering the circumstances. That truly is our goal. This sheet will go over some information about what to expect for the next few weeks now that the root canal is completed. Please follow the instructions outlined below, and contact us should any questions or problems arise.

1. DO NOT eat or drink anything for the next half hour. DO NOT try to feel around your tooth with your tongue. You have a temporary filling in the tooth and it takes about half an hour to harden.
 2. It is essential for you to follow up with your general dentist on the final restoration of this tooth. If this is not done, the tooth is very likely to fracture or to develop new decay underneath the temporary filling which may cause your root canal to fail. *You will be responsible for all costs incurred if you fail to follow this instruction.*
 3. DO NOT use the tooth to bite down on anything hard (peanuts, pretzels, ice, etc.) until the permanent filling/crown has been placed on the tooth. Again, the tooth is prone to fracture and if you bite down on anything too hard or crunchy you may crack the tooth.
 4. It is normal for the temporary filling to “divot” in with use. It is very rare for it to fall out entirely. If the temporary falls out you should contact us, or your general dentist as soon as possible. If it happens when our office is closed, we recommend you purchase some temporary filling material from any pharmacy and place a dab in the tooth until you have an opportunity to see us at our office.
 5. *Some minor discomfort in the area is normal following the root canal. It is normal for the tooth to be uncomfortable for 2-3 days after today’s treatment.* Sometimes, depending on the circumstances, the tooth and surrounding tissues may remain sore for **a few weeks** post treatment. The three most common reasons for pain are:
 - Sore jaw joint from having your mouth open for a prolonged time.
 - Sore muscle from the injection site.
 - Sore gum from the rubber dam placement.
 6. WHAT DO I DO ABOUT THE PAIN???
- All of the above scenarios should be handled with over the counter medication, primarily. We recommend you take:
600 mg Ibuprofen (3 over the counter pills of Advil or Motrin or generic equivalent) every 6 hours for the next 2 days.
OR
(if unable to take ibuprofen)
1000mg Acetaminophen (2 extra strength Tylenol or generic equivalent) every 6-8 hours for the next 2 days.
90% of the time this is enough to handle the discomfort. If it is not, please contact our office and we will ensure you are comfortable.
7. If you are given any prescription medications related to this treatment please take them as instructed by your doctor.
 8. You may floss and brush your tooth as normal, unless told otherwise by the doctor.

FLARE-UPS

Although about 95% of root canals cause very little to no discomfort after the treatment is completed, there are about 5% of cases which can cause significant pain. These are commonly referred to as “flare-ups.” They mostly occur on badly infected teeth, teeth that are extremely irritated, or teeth that have a history of prior treatment. Sometimes, however, they occur randomly, even on patients that have had several root canals done previously without any problems.

If you have a flare-up you may experience moderate to severe pain, swelling (can get as large as a golf ball), bruising, throbbing, and general discomfort, which usually begins a few hours after treatment and may last 2 to 3 days.

Please contact our office if you experience any of these symptoms and we will do everything we possibly can to get you some relief. You may be prescribed antibiotics, stronger pain medication, a steroid, and/or you may be asked to come to the office to receive further therapy.