

Post-Operative Instructions

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.

What should I expect following endodontic treatment?

The root canal system inside your tooth has been thoroughly cleaned, and the irritated tissue and bacteria that have caused you to need root canal treatment are gone.

It is normal to feel some tenderness in the area over the next few days as your body undergoes the natural healing process. You may also feel some tenderness in your jaw from keeping it open for an extended period of time. These symptoms are temporary and usually respond very well to over-the-counter pain medications. It is important for you to follow the instructions on how to take these medications. Remember that narcotic medications, if prescribed, may make you drowsy, and caution should be exercised in operating dangerous machinery or driving a car after taking them.

Your tooth may continue to feel slightly different from your other teeth for some time after your root canal treatment has been completed. However, if you have severe pain or pressure that lasts more than a few days, contact your endodontist.

Taking Care of Your Tooth

Root canal treatment is only one step in returning your tooth to full function. A proper final restoration of the tooth is extremely important in ensuring long-term success.

Contact your dentist within two weeks to arrange your next appointment. If your tooth is being treated in more than one visit by an endodontist, do not return to your dentist for the final restoration until the root canal treatment is completed.

What the Future Holds

The tooth that has had appropriate endodontic treatment followed by a proper restoration can last as long as your other natural teeth. After the tooth has been restored, you need only practice good oral hygiene, including brushing, flossing, regular checkups and cleanings.

Your dentist or endodontist may periodically x-ray the tooth to ensure that healing has occurred. Occasionally, a tooth that has undergone endodontic treatment does not heal or pain continues. At times, the tooth may become painful or diseased months or even years after successful treatment. Often when this occurs, repeating the endodontic procedure can save the tooth.

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. **You need to have a permanent filling or a crown placed on your tooth within 1 MONTH of the root canal being completed.** It is essential for you to follow up with your general dentist on this. 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. How should any post-treatment discomfort be managed? Most circumstances are effectively managed using over-the-counter medications. We recommend (if no contraindications exist) ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) either alone or, if necessary, in conjunction with acetaminophen.
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.