

Aftercare Following Endodontic (Root Canal) Treatment

What To Expect

- It is not uncommon for a tooth to be uncomfortable or even exhibit a dull ache immediately after receiving root canal therapy. The amount of discomfort after is often related to the amount of discomfort prior to treatment and will usually subside within one week if not sooner.
- Your tooth will be tender to biting pressure and may even appear to feel loose. The feeling is the result of the sensitivity of nerve-endings in the tissue just *outside* the end of the root (the fibers that hold the tooth into the bone) and not in the area inside the tooth that was treated with the root canal. The inflammation will sometimes peak approximately 48 hours after treatment.
- The treated tooth will not ever have hot or cold sensation after treatment, and any sensitivity relating to temperature would originate from an adjacent tooth.
- You may feel a depression or rough area (on the top of a back tooth or the back of a front tooth) where our access was made. There is a soft, temporary material in the area, which may wear away to some degree before your next visit. There is no need for concern as long as some of the temporary material is covering the opening.
- Occasionally, a small “bubble” or “pimple” will appear on the gum tissue within a few days of treatment. This represents the release of pressure, irritants, and bacteria that can no longer be sustained around the tooth. This bump should disappear within a few days.

What to Do

- We recommend you take something for pain relief within one hour of leaving our office to get the medication into your blood stream before the anesthesia subsides. We recommend ibuprofen (Nuprin, Advil, Motrin) – 600mg (three tablets). Alternatively, two Aleve tablets will also work well.
- If you have a medical condition or gastrointestinal disorder which precludes ibuprofen, acetaminophen (Tylenol, Excedrin) – 1000mg is a substitute, although it does not contain anti-inflammatory properties.
- **For more severe discomfort** the above medications can be alternated every 2-3 hours (600mg ibuprofen, wait 2-3 hours, then 1000mg acetaminophen, wait 2-3 hours, 600mg ibuprofen, etc.). Vicodin and Tylenol #3 contain acetaminophen and can also be alternated with ibuprofen instead of Tylenol (ibuprofen being the first medication of choice if one is to be stopped). Do not exceed the recommended dosage of Aleve, and also try not to take these medications on an empty stomach.
- For back teeth, whenever possible, try to chew on the opposite side from the tooth we have just treated until you have a crown or onlay placed, or until the access is restored. Until that time, your tooth is still weakened and could fracture.
- Please avoid chewing any sticky or hard foods around the treated tooth to avoid dislodging the temporary material or fracturing the tooth.
- Current research has shown that even newly sealed root canals will be totally contaminated with bacteria in less than one month if the temporary filling is missing. It is very important that you return to your family dentist and have the tooth restored with at least a permanent filling within six weeks after completion of the root canal.

Please Call Us If...

- You are experiencing symptoms more intense or of longer duration than those described above.
- You encounter significant post-operative swelling.
- The temporary material is dislodged, feels loose, or feels “high” when biting.
- Your tooth fractures.
- You have any questions at all.