

# Post Operative Instructions Following a Root Canal

## Eating

We used a local anesthetic to thoroughly numb the area we treated. The numbness may last for several hours. You should avoid any chewing until the numbness has completely worn off to avoid damage to your lips, tongue, and cheeks.

## Pain

- Mild-Moderate Pain: For the first few days after your root canal therapy, you may have some discomfort or sensitivity in the tooth that was treated, particularly if there was pain and infection prior to the treatment. To control discomfort, we recommend that you take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, following label directions.
- Severe Pain: We can also give you a prescription for a stronger pain reliever, if needed. Make sure you take the medication according to the instructions. Pain medication may take up to an hour to take effect and may only work 3-4 hours. It is important to try and keep ahead of anticipated pain. Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking pain medication.
- To avoid nausea, do not take pain medication on an empty stomach.
- To further reduce pain and swelling, you can rinse every two hours with warm salt water. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water and gently swish the water around the tooth and spit.
- If antibiotics have been prescribed for the infection, it's important that you take them for the full length of time indicated on the prescription, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone. Women of childbearing age should know of the possible **reduced effectiveness of oral contraceptives during antibiotic therapy** and are advised to use additional form of contraception during short-term antibiotic use.

## Temporary crown or filling

The temporary filling or crown was placed to protect your teeth and gum tissues. It is common for a small portion of a temporary filling to wear away or break off. This is usually not a problem. However, you should take these precautions to ensure that your temporary filling or crown stays securely in place:

- Avoid chewing gum and eating sticky or hard foods.
- If possible, chew only on the opposite side of your mouth.
- Continue to brush normally.
- Floss carefully each day pulling the floss out from the side as you floss next to the temporary—lifting the floss out from the top can cause the temporary to come loose.

It's vital to the proper fit of your final restoration that your temporary stays in place. If your temporary does come off, call us immediately so we can arrange to cement it back into place. If you are unable to come in, a thin layer of denture adhesive applied inside the crown or bridge will hold it in place temporarily.

## Please be sure to call our office if:

- Your bite feels uneven.
- Your tooth feels "tight" or you have difficulty flossing around the tooth.
- You have persistent pain.
- You have any questions or concerns about your restored tooth.