



ROOT CANAL POST-OPERATION INSTRUCTIONS

Root canal therapy often takes two or more appointments to complete. After each appointment when anesthetic has been used, your lips, teeth and tongue may be numb for several hours.

A temporary filling or crown might have been placed by your dentist to protect the tooth between appointments. Between appointments, it's common (and not a problem) for a small portion of your temporary filling or crown to wear away or break off. If the entire filling falls out, or if a temporary crown comes off, please call our office so it can be replaced.

Now that you have had root canal therapy, it is important to follow these recommendations to ensure healing:

General rules

- If a temporary filling or crown was placed, avoid chewing for at least one-half hour to allow the restoration to harden.
- It is not a problem for a small portion of a temporary filling to wear away or break off, but if the entire filling wears out, or if a temporary crown comes off, call us so that it can be replaced.

Chewing and eating

- If anesthetics were used during the procedure, avoid chewing until numbness has completely worn off. Your lips, teeth, and tongue may be numb for several hours.
- To keep your temporary restoration in place, avoid eating hard or sticky foods, especially chewing gum, ice, fingernails and pencils.
- If possible, chew on the opposite side of your mouth.

Brushing and flossing

- Brush and floss normally while not being too vigorous. Please make every effort to clean your teeth within the bounds of comfort.

Medication and discomfort

- **Please take all prescription medications as directed.** If antibiotics were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.
- Unfortunately, it is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a root canal appointment, especially when chewing.
- To control discomfort, take pain medication before the anesthetic has worn off or as recommended.
- To further reduce discomfort or swelling, rinse your mouth three times a day with warm salt water. Use about one teaspoon of salt per glass of warm water. Try and rinse gently.

Follow-up appointments

Usually, the last step after root canal treatment is the placement of a crown on the tooth. A crown covers and protects the tooth from breaking in the future. Unless otherwise noted by the dentist, it is critical to have a crown placed on your root canal therapy treated tooth as soon as possible. Delay in obtaining final restoration (crown) may result in fracture and/or possible loss of the tooth. Your doctor will inform you exactly on when to come back.

Please call your dentist immediately if you:

- have uncontrollable pain.
- feel that your bite is uneven.
- have sensitivity or discomfort that increases or continues beyond 3 or 4 days.
- notice that your temporary filling or crown comes off.
- have any questions or concerns.