

Root Canal

Congratulations! You've just had a root canal!!!

Though long a favorite for comedians as an example of one of life's worst experiences, today a root canal is pretty routine. But if you want to get a little sympathy from family and friends, go for it! We won't tell.

Now for the facts:

There are two parts to doing a root canal. First, we clean out the contents of the canal(s) inside the tooth. Second, we place a sealed filling inside those canal(s). Each root canal is done for different reasons. These reasons determine if it can be done in one or multiple appointments and also influence healing and discomfort. So each one acts a little differently.

How much pain will I feel?

The sensory nerve (inside the tooth) is now gone. This is the nerve that senses cold, hot, and sweets. So THIS tooth won't feel any of those any more. Often that is a great relief. However, neighboring teeth often share the same nerve trunks. If the inflammation has spread, these neighboring teeth may still act a bit oversensitive for a while, so be careful!

While doing the root canal, we slightly 'bruise' the ligaments around the tooth, and the nerves here (outside the tooth) are very much alive. These nerves sense pressure. So chewing on the root canal tooth will be sore for a time. Just try to avoid it, and maybe choose a softer diet.

To resolve this inflammation, we recommend taking ibuprofen (advil, motrin IB, etc) for the first 72 hours. 800mg (four 200mg tablets) taken four times a day for three days is a dose that will be anti-inflammatory. This is therapy, unlike tylenol or aspirin would be. This dosage is very safe. (Except if you have stomach ulcers or immune system troubles, then let's discuss your options)

Down the road:

The success of the treatment is very high, over 90%. Occasionally, additional treatment is necessary to get total healing. We will monitor this healing with an x-ray at a future visit.

Teeth that take lots of chewing force (most back teeth) that have a root canal will have a strengthening post placed followed by a cast crown. You usually can choose between gold and porcelain for the crown. This protection and strength are necessary for long term success. If you have a temporary filling today, we will be doing this soon.

We hope your healing goes well. After the inflammation is gone, the treatment will be forgotten. If further questions arise please call us.