

Home Care Instructions Following Root Canal Therapy

Numbness

We used a local anesthetic to thoroughly numb the area being treated. The numbness may last for several hours as the anesthetic effect wears off. Please avoid chewing until this numbness wears off to avoid injuring your lip, tongue, cheeks, etc. You may experience bruising, trouble opening your mouth, or prolonged numbness. While these are not unusual please let us know if these occur.

Caring for your temporary filling

The temporary filling is used to keep food and bacteria out of your tooth until treatment is completed. The temporary filling may chip, break, or come out. Please let us know if it comes out. Please avoid chewing sticky or hard food and try to eat on the opposite side if possible.

Hygiene

Brush after each meal. Floss VERY carefully around the treated tooth. Don't pull floss up; pull it out from the side. Salt-water rinses are recommended if your gums feel "raw" in the area – this will help prevent infection and expedite healing. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, and then gently swish the water around the tooth and spit. An anti-microbial rinse such as Listerine works great to help keep the area cleansed.

Discomfort

For the first few days after root canal therapy, it is not uncommon for the area to be sore. This is usually due to inflammation. Therefore, an anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) will help the most. It can take 30-60 min to start working and lasts about 4-6 hours from when you take it. If your discomfort is greater a prescription pain medication may be prescribed. These prescriptions usually prohibit driving, working, decision-making, etc. while taking them.

Infection

The root canal treatment is aimed at eradicating the infection in the tooth. If the infection has spread from the tooth causing fever, swelling, enlarged lymph nodes, trouble swallowing or breathing then a prescription for an antibiotic is usually indicated. If you are given a prescription take it as directed until it is all gone. If you develop an allergy (rash, swelling, etc) stop taking immediately and notify your doctor. To help prevent infection brush, floss, and rinse regularly. The salt-water rinse mentioned previously is particularly helpful.

Completed treatment

Finishing the root canal and restoration, are VERY important for a good outcome. A root canal can take multiple appointments depending on the difficulty of treatment and degree of infection. The root canal is not finished until the roots are filled, a permanent crown is placed, and pain and infection are resolved.

Questions or Emergency

If you need assistance please call the All Smiles Dentistry office at 425.335.1111 or Dr. Steinhubel on the after hours pager at 425.423.1133

Thank you for choosing All Smiles Dentistry for your dental health needs!!