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YOUR GUIDE TO ENDODONTIC POST-TREATMENT CARE

By saving your tooth with root canal treatment, you have made a significant step toward better oral health. This guide is intended to answer questions you may have about the post-operative period and to give you information on how to preserve the health of your tooth following root canal treatment.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FOLLOWING ENDODONTIC TREATMENT?

*The root canal system inside your tooth has been thoroughly cleaned, and the irritated tissue and bacteria that have caused you to need root canal treatment are gone. It is normal to feel some tenderness in the area over the next few days as your body undergoes the natural healing process. The treated tooth is commonly **VERY** tender to touch, biting, tapping or chewing for a few days after treatment. **DO NOT CHEW ON THAT SIDE.** Discomfort usually subsides in a couple days, but may last as long as a few weeks. Improvement will be gradual. The treated tooth, the injection sites, as well as the soft tissues around the tooth, will feel sore and tender. If your tooth throbs, keep your head elevated, even when lying down. Refrain from any strenuous activity. We usually recommend a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, or aspirin for at least three to five days following treatments. If you cannot take any anti-inflammatory medication, then take extra-strength Tylenol. If any of the recommended painkillers are not effective relieving the pain, you should call the office. Take all prescribed medication as directed. Rinsing the mouth with warm salt water (one teaspoon salt to 8 oz of warm water), three to four times a day may also be helpful in relieving discomfort.*

If you initially feel better, but then get significantly worse two or three days after treatment, you may be experiencing what is known as a “flare-up”. If this occurs, the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications mentioned above should be taken. Contact our office if needed. There is usually no necessary “waiting period” for you to see your general dentist. Unless otherwise indicated, have the tooth restored as soon as possible. Do not wait more than two to four weeks. We routinely like to perform a follow-up exam at least six months after the treatment. We want to evaluate the treatment outcome, be sure that you have regained normal function with the tooth, and determine the presence of bone healing. There is no charge for this visit

GUIDELINES FOR POST-TREATMENT CARE

- *Do not eat anything until the numbness in your mouth wears off. This will prevent you from biting your cheek or tongue.*
- *Be sure to brush and floss your teeth as you normally would.*
- *If the opening in your tooth was restored with a temporary filling material; it is not unusual for a thin layer to wear off in-between appointments. However, if you think the entire filling has come out, contact our office.*
- *Contact our office right away if you develop any of the following:*
 - *A visible swelling inside or outside of your mouth*

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL US AT 812-333-6621.

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- *An allergic reaction to medication, including rash, hives or itching (nausea is not an allergic reaction);*
- *A return of original symptoms; or*
- *Your bite feels uneven.*

TAKING CARE OF YOUR TOOTH

Root canal treatment is only one step in returning your tooth to full function. A proper final restoration of the tooth is extremely important in ensuring long-term success. Contact your dentist within two weeks to arrange your next appointment. If your tooth is being treated in more than one visit by an endodontist, do not return to your dentist for the final restoration until the root canal treatment is completed.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

The tooth that has had appropriate endodontic treatment followed by a proper restoration can last as long as your other natural teeth. After the tooth has been restored, you need only practice good oral hygiene, including brushing, flossing, regular checkups and cleanings.

Your dentist or endodontist may periodically x-ray the tooth to ensure that healing has occurred. Occasionally, a tooth that has undergone endodontic treatment does not heal or pain continues. At times, the tooth may become painful or diseased months or even years after successful treatment. Often when this occurs, repeating the endodontic procedure or endodontic surgery can save the tooth.

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