

After Your Root Canal Therapy Has Been Initiated

Your endodontic, or root canal therapy will usually maintain your tooth and relieve the pain you may have been experiencing. Please avoid biting on the tooth for 30 minutes after your appointment so your filling may harden. Also, avoid biting your lip, cheek and tongue while anesthetized (numb) since this may cause damage to them.

Will I have discomfort after the treatment?

Cleaning of the root canals may cause inflammation of the area surrounding your tooth which commonly results in some discomfort after endodontic therapy. You may experience some discomfort ranging from one day to several days, especially when chewing. If your tooth hurt before you came in for treatment, it may take a while to feel normal again. Should you have pain that you cannot tolerate, abnormal swelling, fever, or pain which persists for more than several days, please call the office. We will suggest medication or other steps to make you more comfortable.

Will I need pain medication?

Over the counter analgesics such as aspirin, Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Ketoprofen (Orudus KT), Naproxen sodium (Aleve) products usually alleviate the discomfort. Some evidence suggests that taking one of the above pain relievers before the anesthetic wears off and continuing for one or two days as directed on the medication label may substantially decrease your pain after treatment. Take 600mg (3x 200mg tablets) over the counter Advil or Motrin four times per day for two to four days.

You will be given a prescription for a stronger medication if we feel it will be necessary. Narcotic medications should never be taken in combination with alcohol, histamine blockers (antihistamines), tranquilizers, muscle relaxants, or any other agent that depresses the central nervous system. Narcotics increase the effects of these medications on the brain, and overdose can result from their combined use. Remember that you must **NOT** drive a car or engage in any type of activity requiring mental alertness while taking narcotic or sedative type medications.

What if I had swelling when I came to the office?

If your tooth was "infected" with swelling, the area may be tender for several days while it heals. If the swelling does not reduce after several days or increases, please call our office.

Do I need Antibiotics?

In most cases, antibiotics are not required after endodontic therapy. You will be given a prescription for antibiotics if we feel it will be necessary. Some medical conditions require a special antibiotic prophylaxis regimen to help

prevent damage to certain structures. If you needed to take a special regimen prior to treatment, continue to follow the instructions for after treatment coverage. Although rare, antibiotics can cause severe and persistent diarrhea. Contact this office immediately or seek medical attention if severe diarrhea occurs. **Women Only:** Antibiotics may interfere with oral birth control medications resulting in pregnancy. We suggest alternative birth control methods should be used during this cycle. If you are unsure, please contact your physician.

What are some possible medication side effects?

It is difficult to discuss all possible side effects but if any of the following develop, stop taking the medication and call promptly: skin rash, hives, itching, difficult breathing, bloody or cloudy urine, bloody stools, severe diarrhea (more than five movements in 24 hour period), sore throat, high fever, unusual bleeding or bruising, severe vomiting, and visual disturbances. Less serious side effects include nausea, stomach pain, heartburn, vomiting, drowsiness, dizziness, headache, and nervousness.

How should I take care of my tooth?

Try to avoid biting or chewing on the tooth during the first few days if it is sore. If it is not sore, avoid sticky foods like caramel, jelly beans, or gum since they may loosen or remove the temporary filling which was placed. If the temporary filling feels loose or falls out please call our office. It may need to be replaced so additional treatment is not required.

What may happen if I do not have the root canal treatment completed?

The purpose of the root canal treatment is to remove diseased tissue from inside of the root and seal the root end. Uncompleted treatment leaves diseased tissue in the tooth with no seal present. By not having the root canal therapy completed, the disease in the roots will eventually spread to the surrounding, adjacent tissues (bone and gums) which may result in a larger area of disease and may cause severe pain and/ or swelling this is difficult to manage once it occurs. In addition, there is only a temporary, not permanent, restoration (filling) on the crown or your tooth. Without a permanent restoration, several problems can occur, including:

1. Fracture of the tooth is more likely.
2. The temporary will be lost. The tooth can continue to decay extensively so that no treatment other than extraction is possible.