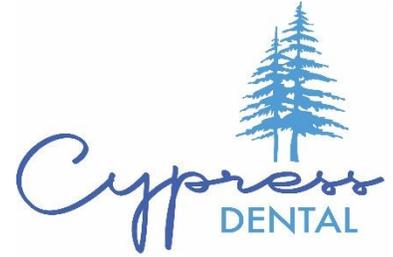


ROOT CANAL POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS



The purpose of root canal treatment is to remove diseased tissue from inside of your tooth and then to seal the root end with an antibacterial barrier. There are a few things to be mindful of once the treatment is completed.

When can you eat or drink?

Avoid eating while your lip, cheek, and tongue are still numb and avoid biting on the treated tooth for the next few days.

Will I have discomfort after the treatment?

Gums: The gums around your tooth may seem tender. This can be a result of the metal retainer used to hold the rubber dam in place. This tenderness usually subsides within a day or so.

Tooth tenderness: The tooth can be tender for several days up to a few weeks and healing will occur more quickly if you minimize pressure on the tooth. Bite tenderness is usually a result of inflammation in the tissue at the end of the root tip which can be aggravated by the instruments used during the procedure. This tenderness usually only lasts for a few days and the discomfort can be managed with Advil/Tylenol (see pain management instructions below).

Why would there be discomfort after the treatment?

- a) Inflammation: Inflammation can occur in the tissues that surround the tooth's root. The root canal instruments used by the dentist can sometimes poke beyond the end of the root tip and irritate this tissue. Although we do our best to minimize the chance of this occurring, these incidents are not necessarily preventable.
- b) Infection: Sometimes performing root canal therapy can temporarily trigger the activation of the bacteria within the root canal system. This can manifest as an acute infection. This is much less likely than inflammation mentioned above. For this scenario, the dentist will normally prescribe you an antibiotic and a stronger pain reliever to keep you comfortable until the infection subsides

Pain Management and Medications:

- a) If there is discomfort, it is recommended that you take Advil 400-600mg (2-3 tablets) every 4 hours for the first 2 days after treatment. If this is insufficient for discomfort, add Tylenol 500-1000mg (1-2 tablets) every 4 hours (in between the times you take Ibuprofen). If this is insufficient, please call the office or, if after hours, follow the prompts in our voice message.

Maximum of Tylenol per day is 4000mg, maximum dose of Advil per day is 2400mg.

e.g. 10am 12pm 2pm 4pm 6pm 8pm 10pm 12am
A T A T A T A T A = Advil T = Tylenol

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- b) There is a chance that antibiotics might be needed for the next few days. If you have increasing discomfort and/or swelling in the next 2-3 days, call the office or, if after hours, follow the prompts in our voice message.
- c) If you were prescribed antibiotics, it is very important to finish all the tablets even if your pain has subsided.

What precautions should I take with this tooth?

- a) Temporary Filling: If your root canal treatment requires multiple appointments, then the dentist may have placed a temporary filling. These fillings will lose their seal over time and can allow the bacteria in your saliva to recontaminate the tooth. Failure to complete the final restoration in a timely manner may result in the need for re-treatment of the root canal(s) in your tooth at an additional cost or possibly severe pain and infection or loss of the tooth due to fracture of the tooth and/or recontamination from leakage. To avoid this complication, care for your temporary filling by avoid hard or sticky foods on that tooth. Moreover, do not delay the scheduling of your next appointment to complete the treatment
- b) You may continue regular dental hygiene regimen. Avoid biting or chewing on the tooth during the first few days. Avoid sticky foods like caramel, jellybeans, or gum since they may loosen or remove the temporary filling, which was placed. If the temporary filling feels loose or completely falls out, please call our office. It may need to be replaced.

How long will my tooth last?

With proper care, your restored tooth can last a lifetime if healing is adequate. Teeth treated with endodontic therapy can still decay. As with other teeth, proper dental care requires regular brushing and flossing, a nutritious diet and regular dental visits. The most common risk after root canal treatment is tooth fracture. If a lot of tooth structure was lost, a crown may be recommended once root canal treatment is completed to strengthen and hold the tooth together, preventing cracking or breakage which could make extraction of the tooth necessary.

Will I need to return for additional treatments?

Once endodontic therapy is completed your tooth may require periodic examination (with x-rays) in the upcoming 1-2 years. This allows us to make sure the tooth is healing properly. Please call our office if your tooth feels unusual or if discomfort persists after 3-4 weeks after completion of treatment.

Fortunately, most root canals heal with about a 90-95% success rate. Sometimes despite our best efforts, a small percentage of patients may need to be referred to a specialist to have the root canal(s) retreated or will need root-end surgery (surgically clean the bone that surrounds the root tip and seal the tip of the root) to achieve adequate healing.