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Root Canal Post Operative Instructions

Root canal therapy often takes two or more appointments to complete. After each appointment when anesthetic has been used, your lips, teeth and tongue may be numb for several hours. Avoid any chewing on the side of the treated tooth until the numbness has completely worn off.

Sometimes, a temporary filling or crown is placed by your dentist to protect the tooth between appointments, it is common (and not a problem) for a small portion of your temporary filling or crown to wear away or break off. If the entire filling falls out, or if a temporary crown comes off, please call our office so it can be replaced.

To protect the tooth and help keep your temporary in place:

- Avoid chewing sticky foods (especially gum).
- Avoid biting hard foods and hard substances such as ice, fingernails, and pencils.
- If possible, chew only on the opposite side of your mouth.

It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a root canal therapy, especially when chewing. It is not uncommon for a tooth to be uncomfortable or even exhibit a dull ache immediately after receiving root canal therapy. This should subside within a few days (or even weeks). Even if you were not experiencing any discomfort prior to treatment, it is normal for you to experience some degree of discomfort for a few days after. The tenderness is normal and is no cause for alarm.

To control discomfort, take 600mg of ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) and 500mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol). If other medications were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

To further reduce pain and swelling, rinse three times a day with warm salt water; dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, then rinse, swish, and spit. It is important to continue to brush and floss normally.

Usually, the last step after root canal treatment is the placement of a crown on the tooth. A crown covers and protects the tooth from breaking in the future. Unless otherwise noted by the dentist, it is critical to have a crown placed on your root canal therapy treated tooth as soon as possible. Delay in obtaining final restoration (crown) may result in fracture and/or possible loss of the tooth

If your bite feels uneven, you have persistent pain, or you have any other questions or concerns, please call our office.