



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: AFTER ROOT CANAL

The purpose of the root canal treatment is to remove diseased tissue from inside of the root and seal the root end. Depending on each case, your root canal treatment may be completed in one, two or three appointments. Once started, it is important to complete the root canal therapy.

After your root canal therapy has been completed:

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 the next few days. It is not unusual for the tooth to be tender after a root canal, and healing occurs more quickly if you do not chew on it immediately. Also, avoid eating, biting your lip, cheek, and tongue while anesthetized (numb) since this may cause damage to them.

Will I have discomfort after the treatment?

- If your tooth was in pain prior to starting the treatment, it will take up to a week or more for the tooth get back to normal. Give the therapy a chance to work.
- If your tooth was not in pain prior to beginning treatment (likely because the tooth was abscessed or had a deep cavity that had not begun to hurt yet), your tooth may be quite sore for a few days after the appointment. This will be alleviated with time; it may take as much as a week or more.
- Should you have pain that you cannot tolerate, abnormal swelling, fever, or significant pain, please call our office. We will suggest medication or other steps to make you more comfortable.
- If you are in pain and need to take something to relieve the pain, please follow the instructions below.

Medication instructions:

- Take Ibuprofen or Advil 600 mg (equal to 3 tabs of over-the-counter Ibuprofen or Advil) every 4-6 hours.
- Please take it as instructed! **DO NOT exceed 2400 mg (12 tabs) in a 24-hour period!!!**

OR

- Take Extra Strength Tylenol 1000 mg (equal to 2 tabs of over-the-counter Extra Strength Tylenol) every 4-6 hours. **DO NOT exceed 4000 mg (8 tabs) in a 24 hour period!!!**
- **You may alternate Ibuprofen and Tylenol for better pain coverage.**

AVOID OVERDOSE! If and when you are taking Vicodin / Tylenol #3/ Percocet / Tramadol, please only take 1 tab of Extra Strength Tylenol. These prescription medications contain Tylenol.

You may have been given a prescription for a stronger pain reliever. This may be filled at any pharmacy if the over-the-counter pain medication does not relieve your discomfort. **If Vicodin / Tylenol #3 / Ultram / Percocet is too strong, you can cut the pill in half. Please do NOT drive or operate heavy machinery while you are taking Vicodin / Tylenol #3 / Ultram / Percocet.**

An antibiotic may have been prescribed to prevent or minimize infection. Please take the antibiotics as instructed until all tablets / pills are finished.

How should I take care of my tooth?

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 or temporary crown which was placed. If the temporary filling or crown feels loose or completely falls out, please call our office. It may need to be replaced.



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Do I need to return for a final restoration?

A permanent restoration such as a crown is required after having a root canal and may require additional appointments. It is important that you schedule promptly for a permanent restoration because the temporary filling or crown will eventually allow bacteria to leak and contaminate 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.

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 and get re-infected. As with other teeth, proper dental care requires regular brushing and flossing, a nutritious diet and regular dental visits.

Will I need to return for additional treatments?

Once endodontic therapy is completed, your tooth may require periodic examination, usually 6-12 months. This allows us to make sure the tooth is healing properly. Please call our office if your tooth feels unusual or discomfort persists after completion.

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 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 or it may need to be extracted.

Please call the office at (703) 323-1300 if you are experiencing severe pain that is not resolved with the pain medication prescribed and lasting for more than 4-5 days. Dr. Mia and her team will be glad to answer any questions or concerns relating to your procedure.