

## *Root Canal Therapy*

The following information has been designed to help you properly care for your mouth after root canal treatment.

**FEELING:** The anesthesia will begin to wear off in 30 minutes to 4 hours. Until that time, avoid all hot foods or liquids, and do not chew. This is to prevent accidentally burning or biting the lips, cheeks, or tongue until the feeling has returned.

**TEMPORARY FILLING:** A temporary filling is normally placed after root canal treatment. This type of filling is used to seal the root canal area until a final restoration (usually a crown) can be placed. This temporary filling is soft and may become easily chipped or worn. If you believe the filling has been severely broken or lost, please call the office for an evaluation.

**TASTE:** After treatment, a medicinal or funny taste may be evident. This is usually due to the irrigation solution used during treatment or the medicated dressing that has been placed inside the tooth.

**TOOTH STRENGTH:** A root canal treated tooth is more susceptible to breaks and fractures. Therefore, it is very important that care be exercised during chewing, etc. , until a final restoration (crown) can be completed. Avoid all hard foods, such as: ice, popcorn, chewing gum, hard candy, mints, lozenges, nuts, peanut brittle, hard edges of bread or pizza, tortilla chips, etc.

**ORAL HYGIENE:** Clean and floss your mouth as usual. There are no restrictions concerning cleaning the root canal treated tooth.

**MEDICATIONS:** In many cases, an over-the-counter pain medication will provide relief from any discomfort. Anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen, are excellent for reducing post-treatment soreness. If the need for a stronger pain medication or an antibiotic is anticipated, prescriptions for these medications will be provided.

**RINSES:** The gum area around the root canal tooth or in the area where the rubber dam clamp was placed may be tender following treatment. Warm salt water rinses (1/2 tsp. salt in 8 oz. glass warm water ) can be swished vigorously every 10 to 20 minutes for the first 2 to 6 hours. (Do not use if you are on a salt-restricted diet. )

**QUESTIONS / COMPLICATIONS:** The following are complications commonly seen following root canal therapy:

- Sensitivity, tenderness and some discomfort may follow the initial visit for root canal treatment. A slight degree of soreness is normal and is to be expected. Although significant discomfort is rare following treatment, it can occur. This is dependent on the condition of the tooth and the degree of pulpal damage prior to root canal therapy. If pronounced discomfort occurs, it will normally subside within the initial 24 hours. If significant pain develops, or if it appears to be increasing in intensity, please contact the office for further evaluation.
- Swelling may occur after root canal treatment. As with discomfort, this is dependent on the condition of the tooth and the degree of pulpal damage prior to root canal therapy. Significant swelling after root canal treatment has begun is rare, but if it does occur may require re-evaluation and/or additional treatment methods to correct.

There are a variety of complications that can arise after root canal treatment. These problems are usually easily controlled, but may sometimes require additional therapy. If you experience any swelling, pain, etc. , that concerns or frightens you, please call me.