Vandervoort
FAMILY DENTISTRY

Post-Operative Instructions for Endodontic (Root Canal) Therapy

The initial healing period after endodontic therapy is 2-3 days, and you will likely experience some discomfort and pain during this period. If you notice any signs of infection (fever, redness, pus, large swellings which start 2-3 days after surgery), contact our office. Before the procedure, you were given a local anesthetic to ensure your comfort. This anesthetic typically leaves your lips, teeth, and tongue feeling numb. For this reason, **avoid chewing until the numbness has completely worn off**.

Pain: Some pain and discomfort after endodontic therapy is expected. You should begin taking pain medication before you feel the local anesthetic wearing off. For mild to moderate pain, 1 or 2 Extra Strength Tylenol (500mg) tablets may be taken every 4 hours. Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) is an anti-inflammatory and may be taken as well. Ibuprofen bought over the counter comes in 200mg tablets and may be taken in the following doses: two 200mg tablets may be taken every 4 hours, three 200mg tablets may be taken every 6 hours, or four 200mg tablets may be taken every 8 hours. **Research indicates that one of the most effective post-operative pain control regimens is rotating 500-1000 mg Tylenol and 400-800 mg Ibuprofen every 4 hours.** If pain is persistent or becomes severe beyond control of the above-recommended medications, please contact our office for further instructions. Do not take any of the above medications if you are allergic or have been instructed by your doctor not to take them. Nausea is also common if medications are taken on a completely empty stomach, so try to take medications with a snack or meal. If any other side effects occur, be sure to reread the instructions and warnings on the medication, and call our office if questions arise.

Antibiotics: Antibiotics are NOT necessary for all endodontic procedures. **If an antibiotic has been prescribed, be sure to follow the instructions to take the full course of antibiotic, even if your symptoms or pain have resolved.**

Endodontic therapy often takes two or more appointments to complete. A temporary filling or crown will be 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.

To further reduce pain and swelling, rinse three times a day with warm salt water - dissolve ½ teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, then rinse, swish, and spit. It is important to continue to brush and floss normally. However, do not force floss around your temporary filling or crown if it will not fit passively.

Usually, the last step after root canal treatment is the placement of a crown on the tooth. A crown seals, covers, and protects the tooth from breaking in the future. Unless otherwise noted by your dentist, it is critical to have a crown placed on your endodontically treated tooth as soon as possible. **Delay in obtaining a final restoration (crown) may result in fracture and/or possible loss of the tooth.** It is our desire that your recovery be as smooth and pleasant as possible. If you have questions about your progress, please call our office.