



Chao Shen, DMD

## **Self-care Instructions After a Root Canal**

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Root canal treatment can take 1-2 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.

A temporary filling is placed in the tooth between appointments. It's common (and not a problem) for a small portion of your temporary filling to wear away or break off. If the entire filling falls out, please call our office so it can be replaced.

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

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

It's normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a root canal appointment, especially when chewing. It is not uncommon for a tooth to be uncomfortable or even exhibit a dull ache immediately after receiving root canal treatment. 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.

**We recommend taking over-the-counter pain medication for any discomfort. If not contraindicated, we recommend 600mg of ibuprofen (Advil) every 6 hours if needed. If the ibuprofen is not enough to bring the discomfort down to a level that is manageable, add 650mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) taken together with the ibuprofen every 6 hours.**

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 instructed, it is critical to have a crown placed on your root canal treated tooth as soon as possible. Delays in obtaining final restoration (crown) may result in fracture and/or possible loss of the tooth.

**If your bite feels uneven or if you experience persistent pain that cannot be controlled with pain medications or should swelling develop, please call our office at 360-334-4400 during business hours or call/text 503-597-8041 outside of business hours.**