

ROOT CANAL

Post-Operative Instructions

These instructions have been prepared to answer question following endodontic treatment. You may need to schedule another appointment to complete the root canal. Your tooth may still require further treatment.

What is Endodontic treatment?

Endodontics, also referred to as root canal therapy, is a procedure that removes the nerves and blood supply to your affected tooth. Blood and nerve supply to your tooth is from within the tooth canals. This area is cleaned, sterilized, filled and sealed. This prevents further bacteria from entering the canals.

1. **PAIN...** You should expect to experience mild to moderate discomfort following these appointments. Realistically, this procedure has involved more than just the individual tooth treated so you should expect some soreness of the gum tissue and the area where the anesthetic shot was delivered. In addition, it has been necessary to remove some tissue from the inside of the tooth, which in itself will create some residual pain. Expect some discomfort, this is normal. Medication such as Ibuprofen, Advil, or Aleve should take care of this discomfort; if not advance to Motrin, all of which are available at a drug store or a super market. You can take up to 800mg every 4-6 hours for prescription strength relief. It is **strongly** recommended that you take one dose before the numbness of the anesthetic wears off. If you are allergic to these medications, do not take them and notify your doctor. Your comfort is our concern and if the above medications do not relieve your pain, we should be notified. Remember, most people experience discomfort following root canal treatment but the above medications resolve 90% of those complications.
2. **SWELLING...** A swelling of the gum tissue is normal. Exaggerated swelling is not normal and we need to know about this. Especially if it involves the facial tissues. Appropriate antibiotics will then be indicated. (Most of the time we do not prescribe antibiotics for root canal treatment.)
3. **ELEVATED TEMPERATURE...** If you don't feel good, take your temperature. If it is above 101 degrees, we need to know about it. Otherwise, take aspirin, Tylenol, or Ibuprofen to control this problem. Appropriate antibiotics would probably be indicated if your temperature is above 101 degrees.
4. **SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS...**
 - A. Following your appointment, rinse frequently, once each waking hour with warm salt water (1 tablespoon of regular table salt in a full 8 oz glass of warm water). Hold over the tooth of treatment and swish for 1-2 minutes.
 - B. Eat a balanced diet- your body needs nourishment for healing. Don't laugh... chicken noodle soup and English tea does wonders!!!
 - C. **DO NOT** take any medication on an empty stomach unless specifically directed. If you do, you will experience vomiting and/or an upset stomach, for sure!

Root canal treatment is not magic. Under normal circumstances, 90% of our patients get along well with over-the-counter medications and experience a successful procedure. Unfortunately that also means that 10% need additional assistance. The biggest problem is upon biting. This is easily resolved by reducing the tooth so it is no longer in function. During treatment we try to avoid any unnecessary grinding on the tooth and occasionally miscalculate in our conservative treatment. If the tooth hurts when you bite, this is easily remedied by a simple revisit to adjust your bite.

We at Ames Center for Cosmetic and Family Dentistry are resolved to help you through this difficult period. If you need more information, please contact Dr. Amie Rockow-Nelson, D.D.S at 515-956-3700.