



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ENDODONTIC THERAPY

You have just started or completed endodontic (root canal) therapy. It is important to remember that this treatment is only one step in the healing process.

While many patients experience little to no discomfort following treatment, postoperative pain varies from person to person. Research has shown a strong correlation between preoperative and postoperative pain. In other words, if you were experiencing significant pain before treatment, it is possible that some degree of discomfort may continue for several days afterward.

WHAT TO EXPECT

It is common for a treated tooth to feel sore, tender, or exhibit a dull ache following root canal therapy. These symptoms *typically* improve within a few days but may occasionally persist for several weeks. This occurs because the infection and inflammation that existed before treatment require time to resolve.

Although every procedure is performed to a high standard, the body's natural healing response cannot be accelerated. Even if you were not experiencing pain before treatment, some postoperative discomfort is normal.

Remember that pain can radiate. During healing, you may experience discomfort in areas surrounding the treated tooth. This is often the result of inflammation and increased blood flow associated with the healing process.

Your tooth may be *sensitive* to biting pressure and may even *feel slightly loose*. This sensation is commonly related to inflammation of the periodontal ligament, which supports the tooth within the bone. Mild discomfort of this nature may last from several days to a few weeks.

Your gums may be *sore*, and the treated tooth may be *tender* when chewing. This is often due to inflammation that existed before treatment as well as normal manipulation of the tooth and surrounding tissues during the procedure.

These symptoms are generally temporary and should improve with time.

WHAT TO DO

- Do not chew or eat on the treated side while the area remains numb.
- Eat a soft diet for at least *48 hours* and avoid chewing on the treated tooth. Avoid foods and beverages that are extremely hot or cold if they increase your discomfort. Continue these precautions longer if symptoms persist.
- Over-the-counter pain medications are typically sufficient to manage postoperative discomfort. Unless otherwise directed by your physician or dentist:



Start with ONE of the following medications:

- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin): 600 mg every 6 hours as needed.
- **OR**
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol Extra Strength): 500 mg every 6 hours as needed.

If discomfort is not adequately controlled with either medication alone, the two medications may be taken together because they work through different mechanisms in the body.

For increased pain relief, take:

- Ibuprofen 600 mg **PLUS** Acetaminophen 500 mg together every 6 hours as needed.

Do not exceed the manufacturer's recommended daily dosage limits. If you are unable to take either medication due to allergies, medical conditions, pregnancy, blood thinners, liver disease, kidney disease, or other concerns, please discuss alternatives with your provider.

If antibiotics have been prescribed, take them exactly as directed and complete the entire course unless instructed otherwise.

Do not smoke for at least *24 hours* following treatment. Thereafter, *minimize smoking as much* as possible, as smoking can delay healing. Avoid alcoholic beverages and strenuous exercise for *24 hours*.

FINAL RESTORATION

In most cases, the final step after root canal treatment is placement of a permanent restoration, such as a crown or filling. A crown helps protect the tooth from fracture and restores long-term function.

We generally recommend that the permanent restoration should be completed within 4 weeks whenever possible, unless otherwise directed by your dentist.

Delaying final restoration may increase the risk of tooth fracture, reinfection, and possible loss of the tooth.

WHEN TO CONTACT US

If you have any questions or experience unexpected symptoms following treatment, please contact our office at 850-732-8837. This number also serves as our after-hours emergency contact number. Call and text messages sent to this number are monitored directly by Dr. Allore.

Seek immediate medical attention or go to the nearest emergency room if you experience difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, rapidly increasing swelling, or any other medical emergency.