



## Post-Operative Instructions Following a Root Canal

Hopefully you had a positive experience with us during your root canal therapy. You may have several questions following the completion of this procedure.

What was done today?

- Root canal treatment, also called endodontic treatment, involves removing the nerve tissue (pulp) located in the center of the tooth (the pulp chamber) and its roots (the canals). Typically, this is done to relieve pain and discomfort or to remove a source of infection in order to save the tooth. Your treatment involved making an opening through the biting surface of the tooth in order to gain access to the pulp, which was then removed. The inside of the pulp chamber and the canals were then cleaned and shaped. Medications were used to disinfect the interior of the tooth to prevent further infection. Finally, each prepared canal was or will be sealed with a filling material and medicated cement to complete the root canal procedure.

What does my tooth look like now?

- There is a temporary filling present that will be replaced by your general dentist after the completion of the root canal. The temporary filling is just that, “temporary” and will protect the root canal from contamination for 4-6 weeks.

When should I see my general dentist?

- After the completion of the root canal, you should see your dentist as soon as possible to have the permanent restoration placed. Delay in the placement of the permanent restoration may result in the following:
  - Fracture of the tooth possibly resulting in extraction.
  - Re-contamination or re-infection that would require the root canal treatment to be performed again or endodontic surgery.

How should I expect to feel following my root canal?

- Sensitivity peaks at **2-3 days** following therapy and healing continues daily
- Since everyone heals differently, it is hard to predict exactly what your experience will be. It is not uncommon to experience the following:
  - *GUMS*: Gum irritation and soreness around your tooth.
  - *BITING*: Soreness when biting on the tooth for a couple of days to up to a week.
    - This soreness may be longer depending on your initial diagnosis and the clinical findings noted during your root canal.
  - *INJECTIONS*: Tenderness and/or soreness in the area where the anesthetic injections were given.
  - *JAW MUSCLES*: Soreness of the jaw muscles due to holding your mouth open for an extended period of time.

**Office number: (346) 396-5673    Fax number: (346) 396-5674    Email: [office@museumendo.com](mailto:office@museumendo.com)**

**Bryan M. Mitchell, DDS, MS**  
*Board Certified by the American Board of Endodontics*



What should I do to help with any discomfort?

- The following instructions are meant to serve as a guide to help you get through the healing phase as comfortable as possible:
  - You can use over-the-counter medications as directed by your doctor:
    - Take three 200mg tablets of ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) every 6 hours for 2-3 days
    - OR
    - Take two 500mg tablets of acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 8 hours for 2-3 days
  - If you were given a prescription (for antibiotics, steroids, and/or other pain medications), be sure to have it filled and follow the directions on your prescription.
  - Rinsing the inside of your mouth in the area of the procedure several times a day with warm salt water rinses (1/4 tsp of salt in 8oz of warm water) can relieve mild irritation of the gum tissue around the tooth.
  - Try not to chew on the treated tooth for the first few days following the procedure in order to minimize irritation to the “healing” tooth. If your bite feels high or you cannot close your mouth without pain, please let us know so your bite can be adjusted.

When can I eat?

- You may eat and drink as soon as the numbness wears off. Avoid hard, crunchy, or chewy food. Also, minimize excessive biting or chewing on your tooth until the final restoration is completed. (Afterwards, remember to continue brushing and flossing your teeth as normal!)

What is a Recall Appointment?

- This is a short appointment typically scheduled 6 to 12 months following the completion of the root canal treatment to evaluate the long-term healing of the area and ensure proper restoration of the tooth.

Additional Recommendations:

- If the tooth is very uncomfortable or you notice swelling that is getting worse with time, please call us. Be sure to keep one of our business cards with you so that you have the office phone number handy. If it is after-hours, you will be directed to the answering service who will help us return your call.

Again, thank you for choosing **Museum District Endodontics** to be a partner in your dental care. If we can be of service in any other way, please contact us.

**FOR AFTER HOUR CONCERNS OR EMERGENCIES PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AND  
SELECT OPTION 4**

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