

## **AFTERCARE FOLLOWING ENDODONTIC TREATMENT (ROOT CANAL THERAPY)**

### **What To Expect:**

It is not uncommon for a tooth to be uncomfortable following root canal treatment. Although the nerve tissue inside the tooth has been eliminated during the procedure, the remaining nerve fibers in the surrounding bone and ligament space are usually still inflamed, and this is what causes the post-operative pain. Typically, the tooth will be sensitive to biting and pressure, and you may notice achiness and/or a throbbing sensation. Considerable variation exists with regards to the intensity and duration of the post-operative discomfort but, you should usually notice significant improvement within 7-10 days following treatment.

In very rare cases, an endodontically treated tooth can become infected within several days after completion of the procedure. In these instances, you will likely notice visible swelling in the soft tissues around the tooth and may experience systemic signs of an infection, such as fever and swollen lymph nodes. It is important to remember that post-operative pain alone, regardless of the intensity, is usually not an indication of infection.

You may notice the temporary filling covering the tooth beginning to wear away to some degree resulting in a rough area or depression. Occasionally the entire temporary filling can dislodge.

### **What To Do:**

It is of utmost importance for you to return to your General Dentist for the permanent access filling and/or crown in a timely manner (usually within a few weeks) after the root canal treatment is completed. Failure to do so will compromise the long-term prognosis of the tooth.

In most cases, we will have instructed you to take pain medication to minimize the post-operative discomfort. Typically, we will recommend taking 600-800 mg of ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, or generic ibuprofen) every six hours for 5-7 days. If you have a medical condition which precludes you from taking ibuprofen and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), then we recommend taking 1000 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) every six hours for 5-7 days instead. In some cases, the treating Doctor may prescribe a stronger pain medication and/or antibiotic if necessary.

As best as you can, try to chew on the opposite side of your mouth from the tooth that was endodontically treated until the permanent restoration has been placed. This will minimize both the post-operative discomfort and the chance of the tooth breaking or cracking.

### **Please Call Us If....**

- You are experiencing symptoms more intense than the ones described above.
- You notice visible swelling in the gum tissue, cheeks or lips around the tooth.
- You think the temporary filling has fallen out, or if it feels loose or "high" when biting.
- You notice the tooth is loose or if you think it cracked or fractured.
- You have any questions at all.