



Root Canal Therapy (RCT) Post-Operative Instructions

If you need assistance during non-business hours, please text us at (469) 907-5250. This is the same number used for appointment confirmations. Messages are checked periodically after hours.

What Should I Expect After My Root Canal?

It is completely normal for your tooth and surrounding gums to feel tender or sore after root canal treatment. This is usually due to:

- **The infection or inflammation present before treatment**
- **Normal healing after the procedure**
- **Manipulation of the tooth during treatment**

Common Symptoms:

- **Tenderness when chewing or biting**
- **Mild soreness while brushing or touching the tooth**
- **Sensitivity around the gums or jaw**

Most discomfort improves significantly within **3–5 days**, although some patients may notice tenderness for up to 1–2 weeks.

⚠️ **Teeth that had severe infection, swelling, retreatment, or a “dark area” on the x-ray may take longer to heal.**

As long as symptoms gradually improve each day, healing is progressing normally.

Please continue to brush and floss the area gently.

Managing Your Discomfort

To stay ahead of discomfort, we recommend taking pain medication before the numbness completely wears off.

Recommended Medications

Unless medically contraindicated:

Mild Pain

- **Ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours**
OR
- **Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 650mg every 6 hours**

Moderate Pain

- **Ibuprofen 600mg + Tylenol 650mg together every 6 hours**

Severe Pain

- **Continue the moderate pain regimen**
- **Prescription medication, antibiotics, or steroids may occasionally be necessary**

⚠ Always take medications with food.

⚠ Do NOT exceed:

- **3200mg Ibuprofen in 24 hours**
- **3000mg Acetaminophen in 24 hours**

Important Medication Information

Ibuprofen

Examples:

- **Advil**
- **Motrin**

Ibuprofen helps reduce inflammation and is usually the most effective medication after root canal therapy.

Acetaminophen

Examples:

- **Tylenol**

Tylenol may safely be combined with Ibuprofen unless otherwise directed.

Prescription Pain Medication

If prescribed:

- **Take exactly as directed**
- **Avoid alcohol**
- **Do not drive or operate machinery**
- **Continue taking Ibuprofen/Tylenol unless instructed otherwise**

For severe discomfort, alternating medications every 3 hours may provide better pain control.

Swelling or Persistent Pain

Some patients may develop swelling after treatment, especially if significant infection was present before the procedure.

Please contact our office if:

- **Swelling develops or worsens**
- **Your face appears noticeably swollen**
- **Pain is not improving with medication**
- **You develop fever or significant discomfort**

In some cases, an antibiotic and/or steroid may be prescribed to assist healing.

If prescribed antibiotics:

- **Complete the full course**
- **Stop the medication and contact us immediately if you develop rash, severe diarrhea, or signs of allergic reaction**

We also recommend taking a probiotic or yogurt while on antibiotics.

Temporary Filling Instructions

Your tooth may have been restored with a temporary filling between appointments.

Important:

- **The temporary filling needs approximately 30 minutes to harden**
- **Avoid chewing on the tooth immediately after treatment**
- **It is important that the tooth remain sealed between visits**

It is normal for the temporary filling to wear slightly over time.

Please contact our office if:

- **A large portion falls out**
- **The tooth feels open or exposed**
- **Food traps excessively in the area**

⚠️ If this occurs after hours or on a weekend, it is usually not considered an emergency. Please contact us the next business day.

Temporary Crown Instructions (If Applicable)

If your tooth was prepared for a crown, you may have a temporary crown in place.

While Wearing Your Temporary Crown:

- **Avoid sticky or hard foods**
- **Brush gently around the area**
- **Floss carefully by sliding floss out to the side instead of pulling upward**

Temporary crowns protect the tooth and maintain spacing until your final crown is delivered.

Please contact our office if:

- **The temporary crown comes off**
- **It breaks**
- **Your bite feels uneven**

Completing Your Treatment

Root canal therapy must be fully completed to properly save the tooth.

Some teeth may require:

- **Multiple visits**
- **Additional medication**
- **Final restoration such as a crown**

⚠️ Once the root canal is completed, a permanent crown is usually recommended to:

- **Protect the tooth from fracture**
- **Restore strength and function**
- **Prevent reinfection**

Delaying the final restoration may increase the risk of tooth fracture or treatment failure.

Eating & Chewing

Until your final crown or restoration is placed:

- **Avoid chewing hard foods on the treated tooth**
- **Avoid ice, nuts, hard candy, and sticky foods**

The tooth may be weaker until fully restored.

When to Contact Our Office

Please call or text us if you experience:

- **Increasing swelling**
- **Severe or worsening pain**
- **Fever**
- **Difficulty swallowing**
- **Allergic reaction to medication**
- **Loss of temporary filling or crown**
- **Bite feels significantly uneven**

After-Hours Assistance

If you need to reach us after hours:

📞 Call or Text: **(469) 907-5250**