



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Thank you for putting your trust in us for your endodontic care. You should expect some discomfort following your treatment. This is normal and it is caused by the inflammatory process that accompanies root canal treatment. The good news is that it is short-lived, usually 1-3 days and peaking at about 24-48 hours. After this, you should expect to see improvement each day.

Medications

The best over-the-counter control of discomfort is with 600 mg of ibuprofen every 6 hours. For more pain control, 1000mg (2 extra-strength) of Tylenol can be taken in addition. If you cannot take Ibuprofen, use Tylenol instead.

Often, Dr. Nick will provide a prescription for moderate-to-severe pain. This is usually a prescription pain medication combined with Tylenol. Therefore, if you do need this medication, continue taking ibuprofen if possible and use the prescription in addition to the ibuprofen. **Do not take the prescription pain medication with Tylenol.**

If your treatment was a re-treatment or any tooth with an abscess present around it: Post-operative discomfort can often be moderate-to-severe following your appointment. The risk of this level of discomfort is higher than if there is not an abscess associated with the tooth. This is because, almost always, the disease in this tooth is due to a chronic bacterial infection. Following the procedure, your body's immune system will become very active around this tooth, often resulting in pressure and/or throbbing during the first 24-72 hours. The best method of controlling discomfort is through the scheduled use of anti-inflammatories (like ibuprofen or naproxen), antibiotics (that are often prescribed), and sometimes stronger prescription pain medications. The discomfort will subside. However, just like any inflammatory process, time will be the best healing factor.

If you have been provided any prescription(s) from our office, please take it as directed.

Diet and oral care

For the first few days following root canal therapy, to minimize discomfort, avoid chewing on the tooth for several days and stick to soft foods. *Why?* Well, pressure from hard, crunchy foods may irritate your gums and nerves, and intensify your pain. Treat the tooth like a sprained ankle — let it heal. Occasionally, post-operative discomfort can last for extended periods of time (3-6 months). This usually does not indicate failure of the root canal procedure. Every person heals at different rates. If you have questions, please contact our office.

If the gums around the tooth are irritated following the endodontic treatment, this may be due to placement of the rubber dam during treatment. Rinsing your mouth with warm water (if you choose, you may add a 1/2 teaspoon of salt to a cup of warm water) will speed up the healing. Warm water rinses should be repeated every three or four hours until the area is comfortable.

Restoration & crown

Upon completion of the root canal therapy, a restoration is placed in the tooth to prevent possible recontamination of the root canal by saliva and bacteria. It is very important that you have a permanent restoration placed. A posterior tooth should get a crown (cap) to cover the entire biting surface of the tooth. This will help protect the root canal treated tooth and prevent possible fracture of the remaining tooth structure.

Please realize that should you neglect to return to your restorative (family) dentist for the proper restoration within one month that there is an increased risk of 1) non-healing of the endodontic therapy, 2) fracture of tooth and/or 3) premature loss of tooth. You may be financially responsible for any further endodontic treatment that is needed on this tooth should you neglect to have it restored in a timely manner (within 3-4 weeks).

Problems – if you have any questions or think that the post-treatment progress is not proceeding properly, please refer to our website for helpful information or contact our office at **706-658-2383** or Dr Nick's emergency phone number **678-653-3717**.