

LifeLong Family Dentistry

Endodontic (Root Canal) Post –Op Instructions

After a root canal is performed it is necessary for the tissues around the affected area to heal. While the root canal has eliminated the infection from inside the tooth, your body needs to eliminate the infection and inflammation from the bone and surrounding structures. Below are our proven guidelines for a rapid recovery.

- 1. Let The Area Rest:** There will be inflammation present in the area that will typically cause; achy or bruised type pain for 2-3 days and biting tenderness for 7 to 10 days. Because of these common symptoms, it is recommended that you choose a softer diet and attempt to completely avoid the treated tooth for the first 2 days. After that, begin to test the tooth and increase use as is tolerated.
- 2. Heat is Your Best Friend:** Heat will bring more blood to the area that will bring the cells and antibodies necessary for healing. The use of a warm salt water rinse (teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water), heating pad, or warm shower will all increase the circulation to the area. Even if you feel that some swelling is present, heat is still the answer. Endodontic (root canal) therapy is done to remove infection. Since the swelling is from an infection, we use heat for the reasons already stated. If cold is applied to an infected area, the blood supply will be diminished and the body will not be as effective at healing.
- 3. Take your medications as prescribed:** It is vital that you follow all medication instructions. It is absolutely critical that any antibiotic medications given are taken until gone. For pain control, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve, are all very potent medications available from the drug store. All of these medications have been scientifically proven to handle the discomfort after root canal treatment. The key to pain control is starting the pain medication before your anesthetic wears off. Please take your first dose as soon as you arrive home. After the first dose, pain medication should be taken every 4-6 hours for the first 24 hours and then as needed.

The discomfort from your procedure will peak approximately 24 hours after it was completed and then should begin to improve. For some patients, during the first week improvement is very gradual. If you feel your symptoms are worsening instead of improving, please contact Dr. Long to discuss your condition.