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WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AND AFTER YOUR ROOT CANAL

Endodontic treatment

The length of a root canal procedure varies tremendously depending on the type, condition, infection and drainage of the tooth. It **usually** takes between one and three separate visits. Because the x-ray does not provide all the necessary information, your endodontist will not be able to tell you exactly how many appointments your root canal will take until well into the treatment of the tooth. Therefore, predicting exactly how long each root canal will take is impossible, so please realize that we respect your schedule but also want to provide you as well as every other patient a carefully done root canal. If you would like a pamphlet explaining the procedure please ask the front desk staff or a chair-side assistant.

Healing

After any dental procedure some discomfort is expected. Most of the time it is mild to moderate and subsides after a few days. If you experience pain that gets worse each day or if you have facial swelling that increases after treatment, please call the office. "Aches" may continue for some time after the root canal has been completed. However, if you have increasing pain that lasts for several consecutive days, contact your endodontist's office.

The goal of root canal therapy is for you to be able to chew without pain. Your tooth may always feel "different" than it did before your infection or different than other teeth around it. It may be sensitive when you tap on it from the side or when you brush your teeth even after the root canal is complete. Sometimes when the bone and ligament around your tooth heal, scar tissue may remain. If you have questions or would like for us to see you for another exam and x-ray, please call and schedule an appointment. There may be a charge for the office visit depending on the situation.

Medications

You may be given pain medicine. If so, read the instructions on how often to take it and do not exceed this frequency or the instructed amount. Do not drive while you are taking a narcotic pain medicine. If you have been given antibiotics, take them as directed until they are all gone. The only reason to stop taking the antibiotic is if you get diarrhea or have an allergic reaction (rash, hives, difficulty breathing). If this occurs, please call our office and let us know that you discontinued the prescription and why. If you have a life-threatening reaction to any medication, call 911. Always read the inserts that are given by the pharmacy and follow the instructions. If you have any questions about drug interactions, the pharmacist can help or you can call our office prior to taking the medicine.

Eating

After your root canal procedure, the ligament that holds your tooth into the bone may be inflamed. This is what usually causes soreness. If possible, stay away from hard or crunchy foods and foods that take strong jaw forces to chew (beef jerky, bagels, tortilla chips, etc.) for the first week. This will allow the ligament to start to heal without being bruised again. Slowly introduce harder foods in the next few weeks.

Your tooth and the new filling

After each appointment, some type of filling (temporary or permanent) is placed in the access opening that was made to get to the roots of the tooth. The pulp has been removed and the tooth is slightly weaker than before the initial problem. If you don't have a crown already on the tooth, you may need one to avoid tooth fracture. Your family dentist will do this. Confirm with your dentist if further treatment of your tooth is necessary. If the root canal was performed through an existing crown, make sure you know if the filling that is placed is temporary or if it is permanent. If it is a temporary, you will need to return to your family dentist for permanent filling placement.

Report and recall

A report of the treatment along with a copy of the x-ray will be sent to your dentist so that your chart may be updated at their office. Also, in a few weeks to months, you may receive a card from us in the mail asking you to return to our office for a follow-up x-ray to evaluate healing. If you do, please call to schedule an appointment. There is no additional fee for this appointment.

Thank you

We appreciate the opportunity to treat you. We strive to provide expert endodontic treatment with the latest technology so that you have the best chance to keep your natural tooth as long as possible.