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Root Canal Post-Operative Guide

Like many dental procedures, root canal therapy may be associated with some post-operative discomfort. This guide is meant to provide you with instructions and information in order to make your experience with us a pleasant one.

After treatment:

--Taking an analgesic (pain killer) before the local anesthesia wears off will help maintain an acceptable comfort level. Please wait to eat or drink until the numbness wears off.

--It is recommended to return to your general dentist within a few weeks after root canal treatment to place a permanent filling, post and core, and/or crown. It is recommended to avoid chewing on the tooth with very hard foods until the final restoration has been completed. Excessive chewing upon the tooth can result in fracturing of a tooth or the temporary filling on top of the tooth falling out. We typically recommend returning to your referring dental office within a few weeks.

Discomfort:

--Discomfort or soreness in the area is normal for a few days and ranges from mild to moderate aching or biting tenderness. Although the nerve has been removed from inside of your tooth, there may still be inflammation in the space outside of your tooth (tooth socket and ligament). This area contains many nerves that will be temporarily irritated from routine manipulation of your tooth during treatment.

--Severe pain and/or swelling of the soft tissues around your tooth are rare (less than 5% of cases). In the event you become swollen or you experience strong pain please contact our office so that we can take appropriate measures for more control and comfort.

Medications:

Most discomfort can be significantly reduced or completely alleviated with over the counter anti-inflammatory medicines. Pills in liquid capsules work faster and tend to be more effective than a compact hard pill form. Stay ahead of the pain and take the medication ON THE CLOCK.

1. Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) Available OTC in 200mg capsules

Take 3-4 capsules every 6-8 hours with food. Do not exceed 3200mg/day

*Do not take Ibuprofen if your physician has informed you to avoid this medication or if you have an allergy to Aspirin or any other formulation of NSAID's. If you cannot take Aspirin, you probably cannot take Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) or Naproxen Sodium (Aleve).

2. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) Available in extra strength dose of 500mg capsules

Take 2 extra strength tablets (or 3 regular strength 325mg tablets) every 8 hours. Do not exceed 3000mg/day.

*Avoid alcohol with this medicine.

In some cases and when a stronger discomfort occurs Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen can be taken concurrently, but staggered by a few hours. Depending on your symptoms, stronger prescription pain medications and/or antibiotics may be recommended by your Endodontist. Please do not hesitate to contact the office and/or our emergency line after hours if additional care is needed at 619-298-9985.