ROOT CANAL TREATMENT COMPLETED

Post-operative care instructions, recovery and protecting the root canal treated tooth

ALEXANDRA HILLS DENTAL



ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Root canal treatment is used when the soft tissue inside a tooth (the pulp) becomes inflamed or infected. During treatment, the pulp is removed, the root canals are carefully cleaned, shaped and disinfected, then filled and sealed to help prevent bacteria from re-entering. The aim is to relieve symptoms where possible and retain your natural tooth.

Depending on the condition of the tooth and whether treatment was completed in one visit or several, a temporary filling or medicated dressing may be in place. Your tooth may still need a final permanent filling or crown to restore and protect it.

EXPECTATIONS FOR AFTER THE ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

- Some tenderness around the tooth or sensitivity when biting can occur for several days, especially if the tooth was painful or infected before treatment.
- Your jaw may feel a little sore from keeping your mouth open during the procedure.
- These symptoms should gradually improve. The tooth may feel different from your other teeth for a short time while the surrounding tissues settle.
- While you are numb: avoid eating, chewing or drinking hot liquids until the numbness has worn off. You could accidentally bite your cheek, lip or tongue or burn yourself.

LOOKING AFTER THE TOOTH

- Avoid chewing hard, crunchy or sticky foods on the treated tooth until it has been permanently restored and your dentist says it is safe to use normally.
- If a temporary filling is in place, try to chew on the opposite side and avoid putting heavy pressure on the tooth.
- Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and clean between your teeth carefully. Keep the treated area clean, but be gentle if it is tender.
- Use pain relief only if it is suitable for you and follow your dentist's or pharmacist's advice and the product label.
- Take any prescribed medication exactly as directed. Do not take antibiotics unless they have been prescribed for you.

PROTECTING YOUR TOOTH LONG TERM

Why the final restoration (crown) and follow-up matters

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WHY A CROWN IS NEEDED AFTER ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Root canal treatment deals with the inside of the tooth, but the remaining tooth still needs to withstand everyday chewing forces. A tooth needing root canal treatment may already have lost a significant amount of structure through decay, cracks or previous fillings. The opening made to treat the canals can also reduce the amount of remaining tooth structure.

Depending on how much healthy tooth remains and where the tooth is located, your dentist may recommend a crown or another suitable permanent restoration. Back teeth, such as premolars and molars, often benefit from a crown or other cuspal-coverage restoration because they take substantial chewing forces.

A CROWN IS A PROTECTIVE COVER

A crown covers and supports the remaining tooth structure, helps restore chewing function and helps reduce the risk of the tooth fracturing. It also forms part of the seal protecting the treated tooth from bacteria.

DELAYING YOUR FINAL RESTORATION RISKS THE LONGEVITY OF THE ROOT CANAL TREATED TOOTH

- A temporary filling is not intended to serve as a long-term restoration. Leaving the tooth without the recommended permanent restoration can increase the risk of fracture or leakage, which may allow bacteria to re-enter and compromise the result. Please arrange your recommended filling or crown within the timeframe discussed with your dentist.
- Not every root-filled tooth automatically needs a crown. Your dentist will recommend the most appropriate option based on the tooth's location, the amount of remaining tooth structure, bite forces and any cracks or other concerns.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE PRACTICE

- Severe pain or pressure, pain that is getting worse, or pain that does not begin to settle over the next few days.
- Swelling inside or outside your mouth, fever, pus, or feeling generally unwell.
- Your bite feels uneven or the treated tooth feels as though it hits first.
- The temporary filling or temporary crown comes out, breaks significantly or becomes loose.
- Your original symptoms return after initially improving.
- You develop a reaction to prescribed medication, such as a rash, hives or itching.