



After Care – Root Canals

While root canal treatment has a bad reputation as being painful, when it's done properly it's usually no more painful than having a tooth cavity filled. The vast majority of tooth or mouth pain you feel is in the time leading up to a "root canal" – caused by your tooth pulp and/or tooth nerve being infected. When Dr. Welch performs a root canal treatment, he removes the damaged tooth's pulp and nerve, cleans inside the tooth, and replaces the diseased tooth tissue with an antibacterial filling. Then, a temporary filling or crown is placed on the affected tooth to allow the tooth to heal. You will need to return to our office for a second visit, when Dr. Welch will restore and protect the tooth by adding a custom-fitted tooth crown or cap.

After Your Root Canal

After leaving our office, it is very important that you treat your affected tooth carefully, because you only will have a temporary filling or crown in place.

Follow these guidelines to avoid problems until your permanent restoration is completed:

- **When possible, chew on the opposite side of your mouth** from where you had the root canal.
- **Avoid eating particularly crunchy or chewy foods** (no gum chewing!).
- **Brush your teeth normally** – you may wish to use toothpaste designed for sensitive teeth.
- **Do floss, but carefully pull the floss out from the side as you floss next to the temporary filling or crown.** If you pull the floss out from the top, you may damage your temporary or cause yourself unnecessary discomfort.
- **Be sure to schedule your follow-up visit** with us so that Dr. Welch can check your healing and complete your dental restoration by inserting a permanent filling or crown.

Other Root Canal After-Care Pointers

As with virtually any dental procedure, there are some common after-treatment patient complaints following root canals:

Discomfort or Pain

- **You may experience mild pain or discomfort radiating from your jaw** after having any kind of dental procedure, and you can treat it with over-the-counter pain medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
- **You may have discomfort or mild pain in the area of the root canal** – the tissues around the tooth may have been infected before the root canal, and it is natural for the tissue to swell in response to the procedure.
- **If you have severe pain after a root canal, call us right away.** In very rare cases, the tooth becomes re-infected or cracked before the restoration is completed by adding a crown.



Numbness

In order to perform the root canal, Dr. Welch will need to numb the nerves to the tooth's root. You can expect to have several numbing shots near the affected tooth; typically the anesthetic makes a patient's tongue and lips feel numb.

- **After you have a root canal, be careful when eating while your mouth is still numb.** When your mouth is numb, it's very easy to bite your tongue or the inside of your cheek!

Sensitivity

With virtually any dental procedure, sensitivity to hot or cold foods and drinks is a potential side effect. After the root canal, you may notice temporary sensitivity to certain sweet foods, air, or extreme temperature.

- **Consider using sensitivity-reducing toothpaste** for a few weeks after a root canal if you are experiencing discomfort due to sensitivity.
- **If your sensitivity lasts more than two weeks** after the final restoration has been placed, please call our office.

After any dental procedure, it's important to practice normal, healthy dental hygiene. Keeping your teeth clean is a critical component of good dental health, significantly reducing the likelihood that you will develop cavities or other dental problems.

