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## Root Canal Post-Operative Instructions

**How to care for your teeth following root canal therapy:** Root canal therapy often takes two or more appointments to complete. A temporary filling or crown is placed to protect the tooth between appointments. You should take the following precautions to protect your tooth and ease any discomfort.

**Numbness:** Your lips, teeth, and tongue may be numb for several hours after appointments in which we have used an anesthetic. Avoid chewing anything until the numbness has completely worn off.

**Temporary fillings and crowns:** It is common, and not a problem, for a small portion of your temporary filling to wear away or break off between appointments. If the entire filling falls out, or if a temporary crown comes off, call us so that we can replace it.

**Medications:** It is normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a root canal appointment, especially when chewing. To control discomfort, take pain medication as recommended. If antibiotics are prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

**Routine care and precautionary measures:** To further reduce pain and swelling, rinse three times a day with warm salt water (a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water). To protect the tooth and help keep your temporary filling or crown in place, avoid eating sticky or hard foods (especially gum). Chew on the opposite side of your mouth if possible. It is important to continue to brush normally, but floss very carefully. To prevent removal of the crown, remove the floss by pulling it through the teeth, not down or up from the space between teeth.

**Your permanent crown:** Usually, the last step after root canal treatment is the placement of a crown on the tooth. A crown covers the tooth and protects it from breaking in the future.

Please call our office if you have any questions or concerns. (540) 377-1223