



## Root canal treatment aftercare

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Root canal therapy allows you to keep a tooth that was dead or dying by removing the nerve and the once living portion and keeping the shell of crystalline tooth that provides all of the functions of a tooth. Below you can find instructions to maximize both comfort and healing in the coming days.

- In general, discomfort prior to root canal therapy is the best predictor of discomfort after root canal therapy.
- A root canal is completed with downward motions from the chewing surface of the tooth. This always leads to some materials and debris pushed out the bottom of the tooth which your body will dispose of. This will cause some minor, dull discomfort for most patients and, in rare cases, bruising.
- Follow the pain control recommendations of your doctor. Most people will take ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for 24-48 hours and be fine. For pain that is slightly more severe, taking both ibuprofen and Tylenol at the same time gives pain relief on par with hydrocodone. In the absence of specific instructions from your doctor, follow the direction on the bottle.
- In all but the most severe cases, antibiotics are not necessary. Removal of the dead or dying tissue is definitive treatment of any infection present.
- Be careful while you are still numb, patients who are numb are more likely to bite or burn themselves.
- The primary determinant of long-term prognosis of any root canal is the maintenance of the remaining tooth. Teeth with root canals have an increased chance of breaking, studies have shown that placing a crown (if the tooth is not crowned already) within four months is the best way to manage this risk.

If you have any problems or questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 515-223-1940. Even if we are not in the office, instructions for after-hours emergencies will be available.

