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Post-Operative Instructions After Root Canal Treatment

1. Numbness After Procedure:

Avoid Chewing on the Numb Side: If local anesthesia was used during the procedure, you may experience numbness for a few hours. Avoid chewing or biting on the treated side until the numbness has worn off to prevent accidentally biting your cheek or tongue.

2. Pain and Discomfort:

It is normal to experience mild discomfort or soreness in the treated tooth and surrounding area for the first few days after the root canal. Over-the-counter pain relievers like Advil or Tylenol can help alleviate mild pain.

If the pain becomes severe or persists for a few days, contact your dentist immediately.

3. Avoid Hard and Chewy Foods:

After the root canal treatment, avoid hard, chewy, or sticky foods for at least 24 hours to prevent disturbing the temporary filling or causing any discomfort.

Stick to soft foods like mashed potatoes, soup, yogurt, or scrambled eggs during this time.

4. Temporary Filling Care:

If a temporary filling was placed, avoid chewing directly on the treated tooth. Be gentle to prevent dislodging the temporary material. It is important to follow up for the permanent filling or crown placement to protect the tooth and ensure long-term success.

5. Oral Hygiene:

Continue to brush and floss your teeth regularly but be gentle around the treated area. Ensure that you clean the area around the treated tooth to maintain good oral hygiene and prevent infection.

Avoid brushing too hard around the treated tooth, as it may be sensitive.

6. Sensitivity:

Some sensitivity to hot or cold may occur, especially when biting down. This is normal as the tissues in the area heal. If the sensitivity persists or becomes more intense, consult your dentist.

The tooth might feel "different" or "not quite right" as it heals, which is normal in the short term.

7. Swelling or Mild Discomfort:

Mild swelling or tenderness around the treated tooth is common for the first few days. Applying a cold compress to the outside of the face (near the treated area) can help reduce swelling and discomfort.

If swelling increases or pain becomes severe, contact your dentist.

8. Antibiotics or Pain Medications:

If your dentist prescribed antibiotics, be sure to take them as directed to prevent infection. Finish the entire course, even if you start feeling better.
If pain medication is prescribed, follow the dosage instructions carefully.

9. Follow-Up Appointment:

A follow-up appointment is essential for placing a permanent filling or crown to protect the treated tooth. Make sure to schedule this appointment with your dentist as soon as possible.

After the root canal, the tooth is more fragile, so a crown or permanent restoration is necessary to prevent fractures.

10. Avoid Smoking:

If possible, avoid smoking for at least 24-48 hours after the procedure. Smoking can delay healing and increase the risk of infection.

11. Signs of Infection:

If you experience signs of infection, such as increased swelling, fever, or persistent pain, contact your dentist immediately. These could indicate that the infection has not been fully resolved and may require further treatment.

12. Tooth Crown or Filling:

After the root canal, the treated tooth may feel slightly different, especially if the filling or crown has not yet been placed. Be careful with your bite until the final restoration is done.