

**Dr. Shea F. Stevens, DMD, FICOI**

**What should I expect after root canal therapy?**

It is important to understand what you will feel after root canal therapy, and more importantly to know what you need to do ensure a successful outcome for your treatment.

The sensations that you will experience after treatment are mediated by several factors. Our experience shows that if there is pain to treatment there will be a degree of pain that will persist for a few days after the procedure. Remember that pain radiates. Therefore it is not unusual during the healing process to feel sensations not related to the area of the treated tooth or even to feel pain when there was no pain prior to treatment.

Often there is minimal discomfort for a few days after treatment, however, an increase in the intensity of discomfort may occur two or three days later and persist for a period of two to three days. This is considered normal. It is a function of how the body's immune response protects it from foreign materials and the inflammation produced by the mechanics of the root canal procedures. Think of the course of the common cold; a little malaise at first, the full blown runny nose phase and the last days as it clears up and you return to normal. A little swelling or soreness does not mean infection; it means an increase in blood volume going to the area to assist in the healing process.

Take your medications as indicated by the dentist or the assistant. Remember that pain relievers only work on the perception of pain; they do not work on the source. Take your antibiotics exactly as prescribed. If your jaw is stiff or sore, apply heat and massage to the area. If there are any side effects from the medications or questions as to the dose and frequency of usage, please contact the office.

Try to avoid heavy chewing on the treated area for at least a week. A crown or new restoration will be essential to help assure optimal success. All fillings can leak and their replacement becomes an important part of the success of the root canal treatment.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the treatment, please contact the office. We can be reached 24 hours a day. (581-0123) You may not presently be taking an antibiotic (and may not need any) but if after three days your endodontically treated tooth does not start to feel better, please call and you may need to start on an antibiotic.

Thank you for your trust and confidence.