

## **Post Op Instructions: Home Care after Receiving White Fillings**

We used a local anesthetic to thoroughly numb the area we treated. This numbness in your lips, teeth and tongue might last for several hours after the procedure. To avoid damage to your tongue and lips, you should avoid any chewing until the numbness has completely worn off.

### **What if my filling hurts?**

It's normal to experience some sensitivity to heat, cold and pressure after your appointment. You can also expect some soreness in your gums for several days. Rinsing your mouth with warm salt water can help to alleviate discomfort and swelling. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, and then gently swish the water around the tooth and spit.

If the soreness or sensitivity lasts for more than a week, please call our office.

### **Do I have to be careful with my fillings?**

White fillings set completely immediately after they are placed, so as soon as the numbness from the anesthetic subsides, you can chew as you would normally.

If your bite feels uneven, or if you have any questions or concerns about your new filling, be sure to give us a call.

## **Post Op Instructions: Home Care after Receiving Amalgam Fillings**

We used a local anesthetic to thoroughly numb the area we treated. This numbness in your lips, teeth and tongue will last for several hours after the procedure. To avoid damage to your tongue and lips, you should avoid any chewing until the numbness has completely worn off.

### **What if my filling hurts?**

It's normal to experience some sensitivity to heat, cold and pressure after your appointment. You can also expect some soreness in your gums for several days. Rinsing your mouth with warm salt water can help to alleviate discomfort and swelling. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, and then gently swish the water around the tooth and spit.

If the soreness or sensitivity lasts for more than a week, please call our office.

### **Do I have to be careful with my fillings?**

With silver fillings, you shouldn't chew hard foods or chew directly on the new fillings for the first 24 hours. If possible, chew only on the opposite side of your mouth.

If your bite feels uneven, or if you have any questions or concerns about your new filling, be sure to give us a call.

## Post Op Instructions: Home Care Following the Extraction (Removal) of a Tooth

- The initial healing period usually takes one to two weeks, and you'll likely experience some swelling for the first 24 hours.
- Before the procedure began, you were given an anesthetic to ensure your comfort. This anesthetic typically leaves your lips, teeth and tongue feeling numb after the appointment. For this reason, you should avoid chewing for two hours following surgery, or until the numbness has completely worn off.
- Some discomfort after the extraction is normal. An over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, is usually sufficient. We can also give you a prescription for a stronger pain reliever, if needed.
- To avoid nausea, do not take pain medication on an empty stomach,
- You can also decrease pain and swelling by applying an ice pack - 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off - for the first six hours following the extraction.
- A blood clot will form on the extraction site, and this clot is vital to the healing process. To keep the clot intact, avoid touching the extraction site with your tongue or fingers, do not drink liquids through a straw, and do not spit vigorously.
- Blowing your nose or sneezing violently can also dislodge the blood clot and impair healing.
- Do not rinse your mouth the day of the surgery.
- Smoking, or allowing food particles to pack into the tooth's socket, should be avoided, as both will significantly affect the healing process.
- 24 hours following the procedure, you can rinse gently with mouthwash or a warm salt-water solution (dissolve one teaspoon of salt with one cup of warm water); gently swish the solution around the affected area, and spit carefully. You should do this 2-3 times each day for the week following the extraction.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.
- Relax as much as possible and avoid all strenuous activities for the first 24 hours following surgery.
- Once the numbness has worn off, you should eat, as nourishment is important to the healing process. Limit your diet to soft foods like yogurt, soft soups, ice cream, or soft-cooked eggs for the first 48 hours. Drink at least eight large glasses of water or fruit juice each day.
- Keep your head elevated with pillows to control bleeding. We will give you a supply of gauze sponges to place over the bleeding area. Change the pad as necessary, and use them until the bleeding stops completely. You can also bite gently but firmly on a moist tea bag for 20 minutes. Be sure to call our office if bleeding persists or increases.

Be sure to brush and floss the other areas of your mouth as you would normally.

The space left by the tooth will feel a bit strange to you at first. Eventually, new bone and gum tissue will grow into the gap left by the extraction.

## Post Op Instructions: Dry Socket

Dry socket is an infection in your tooth socket after a tooth is extracted. The condition usually develops when a blood clot fails to form in the socket, or if the blood clot comes loose. Dry socket occurs in approximately five percent of all tooth extractions.

Normally, the blood clot that forms after a tooth is removed promotes healing, laying the foundation for the growth of new bone tissue. When dry socket occurs, this blood clot is lost and the infected, inflamed socket appears empty. Nerves are exposed, and sometimes the bone is visible in the empty socket.

You may not have symptoms until three to five days after the extraction. Then, the condition will manifest itself as severe pain that doesn't subside, often accompanied by what feels like an earache. You may also have an unpleasant taste in your mouth, and bad breath.

### Causes & prevention

Several things can cause the premature loss of a blood clot from an extraction site, including smoking, forceful spitting, sucking through a straw, coughing or sneezing. You should also avoid consuming carbonated or alcoholic beverages after an extraction, as these have also been associated with the development of dry socket. Also, you should:

- Keep your fingers and tongue away from the extraction site.
- Apply an ice pack to your jaw for the first 24 hours following surgery - on for 15-20 minutes, and off for 30-40 minutes - to prevent pain and swelling and stop excessive bleeding.
- Do not rinse your mouth the day of surgery. The next day, you can rinse gently with warm salt water; dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water. Be sure to rinse and spit gently.

Call our office right away if you notice any symptoms of dry socket. Treatment for dry socket typically includes a gentle rinsing of the socket. We then pack it with topical anesthetic and a sterile gauze dressing. You'll usually need to return to our office two to three times over a two-week time period, so we can change the dressing.

## Post Op Instructions: The Importance of a Temporary Crown or Bridge

We will place a temporary crown or bridge to protect your teeth and gum tissues while a custom restoration is being created for you in a dental laboratory. In addition, this temporary will help prevent the adjacent teeth from shifting, ensuring that your final custom-crafted crown or bridge will fit. Temporary cement will be used to hold the restoration in place.

Although the temporary should be very comfortable, you may need to alter your eating and oral hygiene habits slightly to ensure the temporary stays in place between appointments.

- Avoid chewing gum and eating sticky or hard foods.
- If possible, chew only on the opposite side of your mouth.
- Brush and floss carefully each day, pulling the floss out from the side as you floss next to the temporary. Pulling out from the top can cause the temporary to come loose. If you have problems flossing, let us know. We have a product called Superfloss — thicker, sturdier floss that may give you better control.

It's vital to the proper fit of your final restoration that your temporary stays in place, if your temporary does come off, call us immediately so we can arrange to cement it back into place.

You should also call our office right away if:

- Your bite feels uneven
- You have persistent pain
- You have any questions or concerns

## Post Op Instructions: Home Care Following a Cosmetic Procedure

Congratulations on your new smile! It's important that you remember it will take some time to adjust to the feel of your new bite. Here are some steps you can take to make that adjustment smoother and more comfortable for you, and to ensure the success of your new smile:

- When your bite is altered, or the position of your teeth is changed, it will feel different for a few days. It takes several days for your brain to recognize and adjust to the new conditions in your mouth. If you detect any high spots or problems with your bite, call us to schedule an adjustment.
- It's normal for your teeth to be a bit sensitive to heat, cold and pressure. That's because we removed some tooth structure, and then placed new materials on your teeth. The sensitivity should subside after several days; if it doesn't, be sure to call our office.
- Your gums may also be sore and somewhat swollen for several days. Rinsing three times a day with warm salt water will relieve the pain and swelling. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in one cup of warm water and gently swish, then spit carefully,
- Mild, over-the-counter pain medication should ease your discomfort during the adjustment period.
- Your speech might be affected slightly for the first few days; this is normal, and is not a cause for concern. You will quickly adapt to the new "feel" in your mouth, and be speaking normally.
- Your brain might respond to the new size and shape of your teeth by increasing salivary flow. This should subside to normal flow within a week.
- If you participate in sports, ask us about creating a Custom mouthguard to protect your new smile.
- Remember, any food or substance that can crack, chip, or in any way damage your natural teeth can do the same to your new restorations. Avoid or minimize tobacco, red wine, colas, coffee and tea. Don't chew on ice, pencils, fingernails, and avoid hard candy, popcorn hulls, and other unusually hard foods.

If you have any problems or concerns, you're always welcome to contact us.

## **Post Op Instructions: Home Care Following a Root Canal**

We used a local anesthetic to thoroughly numb the area being treated. This numbness in your lips, teeth and tongue might last for several hours after the procedure. You should avoid any chewing until the numbness has completely worn off.

### **Caring for your temporary crown or filling**

The temporary filling or crown was placed to protect your teeth while your custom restoration is being created in a dental lab. It's common for a small portion of a temporary filling to wear away or break off. This usually is not a problem. However, you should take these precautions to ensure that your temporary filling or crown stays securely in place:

- Avoid chewing gum and eating sticky or hard foods
- If possible, chew only on the opposite side of your mouth
- Continue to brush normally
- Floss carefully each day pulling the floss out from the side as you floss next to the temporary—lifting the floss out from the top can cause the temporary to come loose

### **What if my tooth hurts?**

For the first few days after your root canal therapy, you may have some discomfort or sensitivity in the tooth that was treated, particularly if there was pain and infection prior to the treatment. If antibiotics have been prescribed for the infection, it's important that you take them for the full length of time indicated on the prescription, even if all signs of infection are gone. To control discomfort, we recommend that you take an over-the-counter pain reliever, following label directions. To further reduce pain and swelling, you can rinse three times a day with warm salt water. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, and then gently swish the water around the tooth and spit.

### **Taking care of your new, permanent crown or filling**

Your permanent crown or filling should look natural and feel comfortable. Continue to brush and floss regularly to ensure that your restored tooth stays healthy. Please be sure to call our office if:

- Your bite feels uneven
- Your tooth feels "tight" or you have difficulty flossing around the tooth
- You have persistent pain
- You have any questions or concerns about your restored tooth