

Post-op Instructions for Fillings

Fillings are used in dentistry to repair a tooth after a cavity or defect is removed. Most often, composite resin (tooth colored) fillings are used. These fillings are fully hardened before you leave your appointment. However, sometimes silver amalgam fillings are still used. The silver amalgam fillings continue to harden over 24 hours, so avoid any chewy or crunchy foods in that area. With either filling type, your gums, tooth, and jaw may be sore for a few days.

While still numb:

- You will be numb for approximately 3-4 hours
- It is easy to bite or burn your tongue or lip while numb
- Avoid eating and chewing while still numb, you may accidentally chew your cheek, lip, etc
- If you are hungry, foods such as smoothies, ice cream, yogurt, are easiest to eat
- When numb, you may bite slightly differently than normal. If you notice your bite feels “too high” once you are no longer numb, please call our office so we can check and adjust your bite

After your appointment:

- It is normal to experience some hot, cold and biting sensitivity for 3-4 days after your appointment. In some cases, sensitivity can last 3-4 weeks
- Sensitivity should gradually improve, if it worsens, please call our office
- If we informed you that the cavity was deep, or that we placed medicine into the tooth, the sensitivity will likely last longer (up to 3-4 weeks), but should gradually improve
- If after 3-4 days you develop spontaneous throbbing, or lingering cold or hot sensitivity (lasting 30 seconds or longer after eating/drinking cold), or worsening symptoms, then please call our office
- Tooth colored resins more frequently have pressure sensitivity, while amalgams more frequently have cold sensitivity

Managing Discomfort:

- You may take ibuprofen according to the bottle before the anesthetic completely wears off in order help with any swelling or pain at the injection sites where the anesthetic was administered and to minimize tooth discomfort
- Do not take ibuprofen if you dentist or physician as advised otherwise, or you have an allergy to ibuprofen
- Your jaw may feel stiff or sore from holding open during your appointment
- You may use a warm compress and avoid hard foods to allow the muscles to relax

If your bite feels uneven, if you have persistent pain, or if you have any other questions or concerns, please contact our office immediately to obtain help or advice.