INSTRUCTIONS FOR AFTER ROOT CANAL THERAPY

- **Root canal therapy** may take two or more appointments to complete. A temporary filling or crown may have been placed to protect the tooth between appointments.

- After each appointment when anesthetic has been used, your lips, teeth and tongue may be numb for several hours. Avoid any chewing until the numbness has completely worn off.

- Between appointments, it's common (and not a problem) for a small portion of your temporary filling to wear away or break off. If the entire filling falls out, or if a temporary crown comes off, call our office so it can be replaced.

- It's normal to experience some discomfort for several days after a root canal appointment, especially when chewing. To control discomfort, take pain medication as recommended. If antibiotics were prescribed, continue to take them for the indicated length of time, even if all symptoms and signs of infection are gone.

- To further reduce pain and swelling, rinse three times a day with warm salt water; dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, then rinse-swish-spit.

- To protect the tooth and help keep your temporary in place:
  - Avoid eating sticky foods (especially gum)
  - Avoid hard foods and hard substances, such as ice, fingernails and pencils.
  - If possible, chew on the opposite side of your mouth.

- It's important to continue to brush and floss normally. Usually, the last step after root canal treatment is the placement of a crown on the tooth or a filling. A crown or filling covers and protects the tooth from breaking in the future and seals the root canal space from bacterial contamination in the mouth. Temporary fillings are only meant to last approximately 3 months. After this time period, leakage of saliva and bacteria around the filling may occur and cause failure of the completed root canal therapy making it necessary to redo the already completed root canal therapy. To avoid tooth breakage and/or root canal therapy failure, complete the final restoration (crown or filling) as soon as possible after completion of the root canal therapy.

If your bite feels uneven, if you have persistent pain, or you have any other questions or concerns, please call our office.