



Dear Patient,

RE: Dr. Scott Waghorn Root Canal Stage 1 Treatment Advice

Congratulations on a successful procedure completed without immediate complications. This guide outlines what to expect from the immediate post-operative period through to long-term healing and is designed to help you understand what to expect, how to care for the tooth, and when to seek review.

Treatment Summary

Today we completed the first stage of your root canal treatment. The following steps were carried out:

- Removal of infected or necrotic nerve tissue
- Cleaning and shaping of the root canals
- Placement of calcium hydroxide dressing (a medicated material to eliminate bacteria and reduce inflammation)
- Sealing of the access cavity with a temporary filling material

The goal of this stage is to eliminate infection, reduce inflammation, and allow the surrounding tissues time to begin healing before the final sealing of the canal system.

Physiological Overview of Root Canal Healing

Following canal cleaning and dressing, the body initiates a healing response in the surrounding bone and periodontal ligament. Inflammatory cells begin clearing residual bacteria and infected debris. The calcium hydroxide dressing inside the tooth works by creating a highly alkaline environment, which helps neutralise any remaining bacteria within the root canal system.

Over the next few days to weeks, symptoms such as tenderness on biting or mild swelling may occur as the body adapts. Granulation tissue forms around the apex (tip) of the root where inflammation was present, leading to the beginning of periapical healing. Provided the dressing remains intact and undisturbed, this environment is highly conducive to successful resolution of infection.

It is essential that the temporary filling remains sealed during this period. If it feels loose, breaks, or falls out, please contact us promptly.

What to Expect Post-Treatment

- **Anaesthetic effects:** Local anaesthetic may last 2–4 hours. Avoid chewing until normal sensation returns.
- **Tenderness to biting:** Mild to moderate tenderness is normal for several days, especially if the tooth was infected or swollen prior to treatment.
- **Throbbing or dull ache:** This may occur in the first 2–3 days as the tissues begin healing.
- **Swelling:** A small amount of soft tissue swelling is not uncommon and usually resolves on its own.

If pain worsens or swelling becomes more significant after 2–3 days, please contact us.

Home Care Instructions

- Avoid chewing on the treated tooth until the root canal is fully completed and restored.
 - Continue your regular oral hygiene routine, taking care not to disturb the temporary restoration.
 - If antibiotics or pain relief medications have been prescribed, take them as directed.
 - Warm saltwater rinses (1/2 tsp salt in 1 cup of warm water) can be used 2–3 times daily to soothe the area.
 - Do not place pressure on the tooth (e.g. biting fingernails, chewing pens, or hard foods).
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Temporary Filling Advice

Your tooth has been sealed with a temporary material which:

- Helps protect the dressing inside the tooth
- Prevents saliva and bacteria from re-entering the root canal system

If the temporary filling dislodges or feels high in the bite, contact us to schedule a short review. Maintaining a good seal is critical to successful root canal treatment.

Follow-Up Plan

- A second appointment is needed to complete the root canal. This is typically scheduled **2–4 weeks** after the initial visit, depending on your symptoms and the complexity of your case.
- At that appointment, the dressing will be removed, the canals disinfected again, and a final seal placed using a biocompatible filling material.
- A permanent filling or crown will then be required to restore the tooth's function and prevent future fracture.

Dr. Scott will advise you on the appropriate timing and next steps. Please ensure this follow-up appointment is not delayed, as prolonged exposure of the temporary filling may increase the risk of reinfection.

When to Email for Review:

Please email **scott@northshoredental.co.nz** if you experience:

- Increasing pain or swelling after 3 days
- Severe tenderness that does not improve with time
- Dislodged or lost temporary filling
- Sensation of uneven bite or pain on light contact

Thank you again for entrusting us with your care. We look forward to seeing you again soon for completion of treatment.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Waghorn', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Dr. Scott Waghorn BDS (Otago)

Expanded Home Care Instructions – Dr Scott Waghorn’s preferred technique

These oral hygiene instructions are based on over two decades of clinical experience and collaboration with specialist periodontists. They are designed to help you maintain excellent gum and tooth health after dental treatment.

Brushing – Twice Daily (Morning and Night)

- Use an **electric toothbrush** – Dr Scott recommends the **Oral-B** range.
- Any model from \$40 to \$450 is acceptable unless a specific recommendation has been given.
- Begin on the cheek (buccal) side of the upper back teeth. Brush up and down the tooth 6 times, extending 2 mm into the gum moving slowly. Go tooth by tooth until you reach the other side.
- Then switch to the inside (palatal) upper surfaces. Brush in groups of 2–3 teeth, scrubbing back and forth 6 times per group.
- Repeat the entire process for the lower teeth.
- This should take approximately 90 seconds per arch (3 minutes total).

Bleeding gums are common when you first adopt this level of thoroughness. This is a sign of gingivitis or early gum disease and will usually resolve within 1–2 weeks of consistent brushing.

Signs of improvement include:

- Gums turning from red to light pink
- Reduced swelling and tenderness
- Minimal or no bleeding

If bleeding persists beyond 2–3 weeks, please contact the practice or book with one of our dental hygienists.

Flossing – Once Daily (Preferably at Night)

- Use approximately 30 cm of floss, wrapped around your middle fingers.
- Use thumbs and forefingers to guide the floss gently between each tooth.
- At each contact point, pass the floss in and out 3 times.
- Continue around the entire mouth.

If you have larger spaces between your teeth, interproximal brushes ("mini bottle brushes") may be more effective. Water flossers and alcohol-free mouthwash can also assist in maintaining gum and interdental health.