

## **HOW TO CARE FOR BONDED, TOOTH-COLORED FILLINGS**

1. Do not chew anything until after the numbness from anesthesia is gone completely to avoid injuring your tongue, lips, cheeks, or the treated tooth. Afterward, do not chew anything with the newly filled teeth for at least 24 hours.
2. To decrease the risk of infection, brush and floss the teeth thoroughly each morning and night, even though the gums may be tender. If prescribed, use the medicated mouth rinses or fluoride gels as directed. As always, you should avoid frequent or excessive exposure to sugar-containing foods and drinks to prevent decay. Brushing and flossing alone will not prevent it.
3. Should you experience discomfort, take any aspirin-free pain relief medication (*e.g.* Advil® or Tylenol®) or the medication prescribed, as directed.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER FILLINGS:**

1. Remember that even a simple filling is a surgical procedure, so some discomfort in the treated tooth and those adjacent to it is normal and to be expected. Depending on the depth of the decay or the fractured part of the tooth, some sensitivity to cold foods or liquids may also occur, so it is always advisable to temper your food's temperature while healing is occurring.
2. Excessively large fillings can weaken a tooth and make it prone to fracturing. If this is the case, the doctor may recommend that the tooth be crowned, that is, to have a cast/porcelain restoration that protects the weakened parts and prevents fracture.
3. The reason for filling cavities is to prevent the spread of the infection (known as *caries*) into the pulp or live portion of the tooth. If the decay process has progressed deeply into the tooth, such that the pulp is already affected, the removal of the decay from this *deep* cavity may trigger inflammation in the tooth. Inflammation of the pulp may require root canal therapy to prevent frank infection of the tooth and eventual tooth loss. If you should note any pain to heat, cold, or pressure which lasts for more than a short time, or is not relieved by pain medication; have pain that awakens you at night or prevents you from falling asleep; or develop swelling--**especially** facial swelling--contact the doctor immediately.
4. Tooth-colored fillings are a composite of acrylic and quartz-like particles. Because acrylics are porous, they may absorb stains over time and eventually require replacement. Do not attempt to "bleach them" back to their original color as permanent damage to the filling, tooth, or gums may result. Please contact the doctor if you are concerned about discoloration.

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide for your care.**