



950 Francis Place • Suite 305 • Clayton, MO 63105
(314) 862-7844 • www.dentalsleepstlouis.com

POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

Caring for Your New Fillings

A filling restores a tooth after decay or damage has been removed.
Most fillings placed today are tooth-colored composite, which is fully hardened before you leave the office. Here is what to expect and how to care for your new filling.

The First Few Hours

- If numbing medicine was used, avoid eating until the numbness wears off. It is easy to bite your lip, cheek, or tongue without feeling it, so watch children closely.
- Avoid hot foods and drinks while you are numb, since you may not feel a burn.
- Tooth-colored composite fillings are set immediately, so you may chew normally once the numbness is gone unless we tell you otherwise.

What to Expect

- Sensitivity to cold, heat, sweets, or pressure is common for a few days and may last a few weeks, especially with deeper fillings. It should gradually improve.
- The gums around the tooth may be sore for a day or two from the procedure. Warm salt water rinses can help.
- Mild soreness in the jaw from holding your mouth open is also normal and typically fades quickly.
- If needed, an over-the-counter pain reliever may be used as directed on the label or as recommended by our office.

Check Your Bite

- Once the numbness wears off, your bite should feel normal and your teeth should come together evenly.
- If the filling feels high, or your tooth is the first thing to touch when you close, call us for a quick adjustment. A high filling can cause soreness and sensitivity, and the fix takes only a few minutes.

Caring for Your Filling

- Brush twice daily and floss every day. Fillings restore the tooth, but the tooth can still get new decay around the edges without good daily care.
- Avoid chewing ice, hard candy, popcorn kernels, and other very hard items, which can chip fillings and natural teeth alike.
- Keep up with your regular dental checkups so we can monitor your fillings over time. With good care, fillings often last many years.

When to Call Us

- Your bite feels high or uneven after the numbness wears off.
- Sensitivity gets worse instead of better, or you develop throbbing pain, pain that wakes you at night, or pain when biting that does not improve.
- A filling feels rough, chips, cracks, or falls out.
- You notice swelling of the gums or face, or a fever.

Michael J. Hoffmann, DDS, FADSA
Diplomate American Dental Board of Anesthesiology
After Hour Emergency Only (314) 560-2858

Maris E. Behl, DDS
After Hour Emergency Only (417) 818-0068

Sean M. Thoms, DMD, MS
Diplomate American Dental Board of Anesthesiology
After Hour Emergency Only (314) 448-5972

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