

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS CARE FOLLOWING COMPOSITE RESTORATIONS**

You have just had one or more teeth restored with a tooth-colored, bonded composite. How quickly you adjust to the new restoration depends upon the size of the restoration and the proximity to the pulp (nerve). The larger the restoration, usually the longer it will take you to become accustomed to it.

**CHEWING:** If you have been given a local anesthetic, please do not chew in that area until full feeling returns. When you are “numb” you cannot feel if you are biting your cheek or lip.

**OCCCLUSION:** The “bite” of the new restoration has already been adjusted. If you have been anesthetized you may not be able to note if the bite feels normal. Wait until the anesthesia wears off and then if the occlusion is not comfortable, call the office to have it adjusted. If you have had multiple restorations placed, please give yourself time to become adjusted to them before you call the office. This may take one or two days. If the bite is off and it is not corrected you could break the filling or the underlying tooth structure. As you might imagine, when the time comes for us to check your bite, your tooth has been anesthetized, you can't feel the bite well and it is often difficult for you to make your teeth meet as they usually meet. It is not uncommon for the new restoration to need a slight adjustment.

**SENSITIVITY:** Any time a tooth is prepared (drilled) for a filling, tooth structure is removed very quickly. The natural wear process that occurs in everyone's teeth proceeds much more slowly. The response of a vital, healthy nerve to this wear is to recede and deposit insulation later between the nerve and the surface of the tooth. Normally, the wear of the tooth proceeds at more or less the same pace as the nerve recedes and deposits insulation. When a tooth is drilled, the tooth structure is removed much more quickly than the nerve can “defend” itself. One response of the nerve is to become sensitive to temperature changes. This will persist until the recession and insulation process can catch up to the rapid removal of the tooth structure caused by the drill. This sensitivity can last from several days to several months. Usually, the more drilling, the more and longer the sensitivity you will experience.

**HOME CARE AND RECALLS:** You may (and please do!) brush and floss your teeth after the local anesthetic has worn off. There is no need to refrain from your normal, daily oral hygiene routine. Continue with your oral hygiene maintenance appointments at the interval we have previously recommended. Problems that might develop around the restorations can be found at an early stage and are easily repaired. If you wait too long, the entire restoration may have to be redone.