

Dental Fillings with Mercury: Environmental and Health Facts



Mercury exposure can harm your health and the environment. Keep this in mind when choosing a dental filling type.

Mercury in Fillings

- **Composition:** Dental amalgam contains mercury (43-54%), silver, copper, zinc, tin, and other metals.
- **Exposure:** Mercury vapor released during activities like chewing, grinding teeth, and drinking hot liquids can be inhaled and enter the bloodstream.
- **Environmental Impact:** Amalgam use can convey mercury to municipal wastewater causing environmental pollution.
- **Prevention:** Alternative fill materials and better decay prevention reduce amalgam use.

Environmental Impact

- **Pollution:** Waste amalgam from dental procedures can be environmental pollution. Mercury from fillings can enter sewers and water bodies, transforming into toxic methyl mercury.
- **Wildlife Impact:** Methyl mercury in water bodies negatively affects wildlife like fish, eagles, loons, and otters.
- **Vermont Measures:** Dentists use amalgam separators to collect and recycle mercury.

Health Concerns

- **Health Risks:** Excessive mercury exposure can cause kidney, nerve, and brain damage. Fetuses, infants, and young children are at the highest risk.
- **FDA Stance:** Dental amalgam is considered safe for adults and children over the age of six.

What You Can Do

- **Prevent Fillings:** Practice good dental hygiene to avoid tooth decay.
- **Alternatives:** Discuss composite resin and glass ionomer cement fillings with your dentist.
- **Make an Informed Choice:** Understand the benefits and drawbacks of each filling material.



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