



Mercury in Dental Amalgam Fillings

Why am I being warned about potential exposure to mercury in dental amalgam fillings?



- Mercury and mercury compounds are on the [Proposition 65](#) list because they can cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- Exposure to mercury during pregnancy can affect brain development and cause learning and behavior problems for the child.
- Proposition 65 requires businesses to determine if they must provide a warning about exposures to [listed chemicals](#).

What is dental amalgam?

Dental amalgam, commonly known as “silver filling,” is a dental filling material that consists of about one-half mercury (a metal) and about one-half other metals, including silver.

How does exposure to mercury from dental amalgam occur?

- Mercury exposure occurs by breathing low levels of mercury vapors and swallowing during:
 - ▶ Placement or removal of dental amalgam fillings.
 - ▶ [Teeth grinding](#) by people who have dental amalgam fillings.
 - ▶ Chewing gum and eating by people who have dental amalgam fillings.
- During pregnancy, mercury can pass to the baby when:
 - ▶ The mother has amalgam fillings put in or removed.
 - ▶ The mother has amalgam fillings and grinds her teeth.

How can I reduce my exposure to mercury in dental amalgam?

- ✓ Have regular check-ups and talk to your dentist about good oral hygiene practices.
- ✗ If you have dental amalgam fillings that are in good condition, avoid removal of them.
- ✓ If you need a tooth filling, talk to your dentist about the characteristics, including strength and longevity, of other restorative materials, such as resin composite, porcelain, and gold alloys.
- ✓ If you have amalgam fillings and grind your teeth, talk to your dentist about possible remedies (such as a mouth guard).

What does the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) say about mercury in dental amalgam?

The FDA:

- ✓ Considers dental amalgam fillings safe for adults and children age 6 and above.
- ✓ Recommends that pregnant women and parents with children under age 6 discuss their concerns with their dentist.

For more information:**Mercury in Dental Amalgam Fact Sheets and Resources:**

- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
 - ▶ About Dental Amalgam Fillings:
<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/DentalProducts/DentalAmalgam/ucm171094.htm>
- European Commission, Department of Health and Food Safety
 - ▶ Public Health Tooth Filling Materials:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/opinions_layman/en/dental-amalgam/l-3/3-mercury-exposure.htm
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - ▶ Mercury in Dental Amalgam:
<http://www.epa.gov/mercury/mercury-dental-amalgam>

Dental Oral Health:

- California Dental Association (CDA)
 - ▶ Oral Health Fact Sheets (38 fact sheets in six different languages):
<http://www.cda.org/public-resources/patient-fact-sheets>
 - ▶ Amalgam:
<http://www.cda.org/public-resources/patient-fact-sheets>
- Dental Board of California
 - ▶ The Facts About Fillings:
http://www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/pub_dmfs2004.pdf

General Mercury Information:

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - ▶ Mercury in Your Environment:
<http://www.epa.gov/mercury>

Proposition 65:

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Proposition 65: Background
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/faq>
 - ▶ Proposition 65: The List
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals>