



Dental Amalgam

Information for Pregnant or Breastfeeding Patients

What is dental amalgam?

Dental amalgam is the silver coloured material that is commonly used to fill teeth that have decay. Amalgam is a mixture of mercury and other metals in a stable form and makes strong, long-lasting fillings.

Dental amalgam fillings have been used to restore decayed teeth for more than 150 years. There is no evidence that amalgam fillings cause any harm to the health of dental patients, including children and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Why have I been given this information?

New regulations in the UK and the European Union (EU) that restrict the use of mercury came into law in 2018. The regulations are part of a worldwide agreement to reduce global environmental pollution caused by mercury. This includes mercury released during the production, use and disposal of mercury products, such as dental amalgam.

According to the new regulations, the use of dental amalgam is no longer allowed for the treatment of children under 15 years old or of pregnant or breastfeeding women, unless the dentist thinks that it is necessary. These restrictions on the use of dental amalgam aim to help reduce environmental mercury pollution and are not a result of any safety concerns about amalgam fillings for dental patients.

Because you are pregnant or breastfeeding, the new regulations apply to you. This means that, to reduce dental amalgam use, your dentist* will not usually use dental amalgam to fill your teeth while you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

* In this leaflet, by dentist we also mean dental therapist.



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What are the alternatives?

The best way to avoid the need for amalgam fillings is to prevent tooth decay in the first place. Toothbrushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and following healthy eating advice can help to prevent tooth decay. Other treatments such as fluoride varnish and sealants can be used to prevent or stop decay in the early stages.

While you are pregnant your dentist may advise postponing treatment unless it is urgent, for example, if you are in pain. It is generally accepted that pregnant women should avoid unnecessary medical or dental treatment to minimise any possible risks to the developing baby. If you need a filling when pregnant or breastfeeding, there are materials other than dental amalgam that your dentist can use. He/she will discuss these with you to agree on the best option.

What about the amalgam fillings I already have?

If you already have amalgam fillings, there is no evidence to suggest that these are harmful to you or your baby's or infant's health. Unless your amalgam fillings are broken or there is further decay, and urgent treatment is required, your dentist will not remove or replace them.

If you would like further information or have any concerns, please speak to your dentist.