Disadvantages of Amalgam

For your dental health.

What are the disadvantages of silver amalgam fillings?

Thanks to the development of new, stronger tooth-colored restorative materials, silver amalgam fillings are often not the best choice for long-term dental health, functionality and appearance. Amalgam fillings can expand with age, or undergo metal fatigue and break down, losing their seal and allowing decay to develop. Amalgam fillings can fracture as they age, which also breaks the protective seal and can lead to decay. The metal in amalgam fillings can also cause unsightly dark gray stains on the teeth and gums.

Worn silver fillings

Silver amalgam — a health hazard?

A growing number of dentists and other health professionals have expressed serious concern over the safety of silver amalgam, and the controversy over its use continues. The National Institute of Health, a federal regulatory agency, is currently evaluating the safety of amalgam fillings.

Fractures can occur

What is causing such concern?

Amalgam is composed of 35 percent silver, 15 percent tin or tin mixed with copper, a trace of zinc, and 50 percent mercury — a highly toxic heavy metal. Amalgam has been used as a restorative material for decades, and several health organizations argue that the mercury is safe when it's bound with other metals, as is the case in dental amalgam.

The debate continues, but we do know this:

- Silver fillings are less attractive than tooth-colored composite resin fillings; for this reason, they're typically not placed in teeth located near the front of your mouth.
- The amalgam fillings expand and contract with heat and cold. This can eventually cause the filling to fracture your tooth, so a crown may be required to restore its functionality.
- Silver fillings will eventually corrode and leak, which can cause new decay to develop underneath the filling. The leakage can also give a gray appearance to the entire tooth.

New materials — namely, composite resins and porcelain — together with advanced laboratory techniques, allow us to avoid all of these problems and produce durable, natural looking results.

Natural looking results