
Dental fillings

Summary

- Dental fillings are used to repair worn, decayed or damaged teeth.
 - A healthy diet and regular tooth brushing can prevent tooth decay, and the need for dental fillings.
 - Discuss your treatment choices with your oral health professional.
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Dental fillings are used to repair worn, decayed or damaged teeth.

Dental fillings are a hard substance used to repair teeth by filling in holes that have been caused by damage to the tooth.

Dental fillings cannot completely repair all damage to teeth, but are necessary to replace the tooth structure damaged by tooth decay.

Cleaning your teeth twice a day and enjoying a wide variety of nutritious foods can help to prevent tooth decay and avoid the need for fillings.

Dental check-ups can help to make sure any problems are found and treated early. Ask your oral health professional how often you should have a dental check-up.

Getting a dental filling

When you get a filling, your oral health professional will use a drill and other tools to remove any decay. They will make sure you are comfortable throughout the process. If needed, they will use a local anaesthetic to make sure you don't feel any discomfort.

Once any decay has been removed, the hole in the tooth is cleaned and dried, and then filled with a filling material.

Types of filling material include:

- dental amalgam (also known as 'silver' fillings)
- composite resin (also known as 'tooth-coloured' fillings)
- glass-ionomer cement
- gold (rarely used)
- porcelain.

Each different material has benefits and limitations. Some types of material may be better than others in certain situations. Your oral health professional can discuss your options with you.

Some people are worried about having a filling made of dental amalgam because it contains mercury. High levels of mercury are harmful to human health, but the level of 'free' mercury (mercury that could get into the body) in set amalgam fillings is so low that it has no effect on health.

If you are nervous about getting a dental filling, be sure to talk about your concerns with your oral health professional.

Where to get help

- Your **dentist**
 - **Dental Health Services Victoria** provides public dental services through the Royal Dental Hospital Melbourne and community dental clinics, for eligible people. For more information about public dental services Tel. **(03) 9341 1000**, or **1800 833 039** outside Melbourne metro
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- **Australian Dental Association 'Find a Dentist'** search function or Tel. **(03) 8825 4600**

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Dental Health Services Victoria

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