

# Metal Fillings

## Dental Amalgam Fillings

Amalgam fillings, also known as "silver" fillings, are a mix of metals such as mercury, silver, copper and tin. They are silver in colour, and so are only used to fill posterior teeth.

### Pros:

- These are the least expensive type of filling.
- They last a long time (on average, longer than composite.)
- They are easy to put in place. (since they are a direct filling, they only require one visit)

### Cons:

- The silver colour may not appeal to people who want a "natural" look.
- Tiny amounts of mercury are released from the filling when you chew. For most people, this is nothing to worry about. Studies have shown that amalgam fillings do not cause illness. They have been used on people for more than 150 years.
- Health Canada has advised that pregnant women in need of a filling may want to wait until the baby is born before they go ahead. Your dentist can suggest other kinds of fillings, if the work is urgent.

## Cast Gold Fillings

These are made on a model (or cast) of your tooth. Cast gold fillings are a mixture of gold with other metals such as silver and copper. These other metals make gold fillings more durable.

A cast gold filling is made in a dental lab on a cast made by your dentist. It is then returned to your dentist, who cements it in place in your mouth. It requires 2 visits to the dentist, one to prepare the tooth and take the impression for the cast, the second to cement the finished restoration.

During the first visit, your dentist cleans out all the decay, prepares the tooth and takes an impression of your tooth. The hole is filled with a temporary filling. Meanwhile in a dental lab, the mold of your tooth is used to make a model. A filling that is the same size and shape as your tooth is built based on the model. When you go back to the dentist a couple of weeks later, your dentist cements the gold filling in place.

### Pros:

- The physical properties of gold make them the most ideal filling material. gold fillings last a long time.

### Cons:

- Gold costs more than other kinds of fillings.
- Gold fillings and crowns are indirect fillings, so they take at least 2 appointments.
- The gold colour may not appeal to people who want a "natural" look..