

Tooth-Coloured Fillings

Composite Fillings

These are also called white fillings.

To place a composite filling, your dentist cleans all decay from the tooth and puts a glue (or bonding material) on the inside of the preparation (or hole). Composite resin is then placed into the hole in thin layers. Each layer is set with the help of a special light that your dentist holds over the tooth. When the last layer of the filling is hard, your dentist shapes the filling so it looks and feels like a natural tooth.

Pros:

- These fillings can be coloured to match your natural teeth.
- They cost less than gold fillings.
- They are direct fillings, so they can be done in 1 appointment in most cases.

Cons:

- This kind of filling is not as strong as amalgam or gold fillings, and so can break more easily. As a result, they generally do not last as long.
- They cost more than amalgam fillings.
- Recurrent decay is more of a problem than with amalgam or gold fillings, so generally they will not last as long.
- They will stain over time, unlike a porcelain restoration.

Glass Ionomer Materials

These are only used on non-biting tooth surfaces. They are a paste-like material that is bonded to the tooth.

Pros:

- These fillings are the same colour as your natural teeth.
- They contain fluoride, which helps stop recurrent decay in the tooth.
- They do not have to be put in layer by layer. This makes it simpler than placing composite resins.
- They are direct fillings and can be done in 1 appointment, in most cases.
- They cost less than gold fillings.

Cons:

- They can be used on non-biting tooth surfaces since they lack strength.
- They cost more than amalgam fillings.

Porcelain Fillings

Although porcelain (ceramic) materials are very beneficial when used in conjunction with metal in a crown, they are only used alone in the case of veneers (see below). This is because the material is very hard and brittle, so when used in an area with large biting forces, they can break easily.