

COMPOSITE RESIN RESTORATIONS

Amalgam is the NHS filling material used for all teeth behind the canines. Some surfaces of these back teeth can be filled using white materials as long as they are not on the top biting surfaces of the tooth concerned.

Amalgam was first used as a filling material in the late 1800's and it proved to have very useful properties for the purpose (though the science of why it didn't understood until much later on). Today it would have difficulty getting a product license because one of its ingredients is the heavy metal mercury. Mercury is poisonous and causes problems in the environment if not disposed of carefully. Once set in the tooth it causes most people no serious problems. However, like all artificial materials used in the body some people will have an allergy to it. This is also true for white filling material, but as a newer material it had to pass more stringent licensing regulations that amalgam has not. The government no longer allows the use of amalgam in pregnant women due to susceptibility of the developing foetus. Currently, this precaution does not extend to small children who need fillings.

Amalgam has the disadvantage of not being tooth coloured, but more serious to the long term health of the tooth, it is not adhesive so it needs to be locked into the tooth by creating undercuts in the cleaned out cavity. This often means cutting away more tooth tissue than just the decay and undermining the surrounding walls of the cavity, which are forever weaker. This is why years later with repeated flexing of the weak walls they can snap off. This will then mean either a new larger filling or an artificial crown being fitted over the remains of the tooth to stop it splitting apart more.

Early generation white filling materials were not as hard wearing as enamel or amalgam. This is no longer the case. White filling material, when used for back teeth on the biting surfaces, is not available on the health service. This is because the government will only fund the least expensive materials that take the least amount of the dentist's time to place. White fillings take longer to place because it needs to be built up layer by layer and then shaped to match the other teeth. This makes them approximately twice as expensive. However, they can last twice as long and reduce the likelihood of a more expensive crown being needed. White fillings cost from £20 to £60 depending on size. It is also worth considering paying privately for white fillings at the front of the mouth because then, the very best white material can be used to give the most realistic appearance.

I have read the above and would like an adhesive tooth coloured filling material used in my tooth.

Signature

Print Name

Date