



## Mercury in Dental Amalgam Fillings

### Why am I being warned about potential exposure to mercury in dental amalgam fillings?



- Mercury and mercury compounds are on the [Proposition 65](#) list because they can cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- Exposure to mercury during pregnancy can affect brain development and cause learning and behavioral problems for the child.
- Proposition 65 requires businesses to determine if they must provide a warning about exposure to [listed chemicals](#).

### What is dental amalgam?

Dental amalgam, commonly known as “silver filling,” is a dental filling material that consists of about half mercury and half other metals, including silver.

### How does exposure to mercury in dental amalgam occur?

- Mercury exposure occurs by breathing low levels of mercury vapor and swallowing during:
  - ▶ Placement or removal of dental amalgam fillings.
  - ▶ [Teeth grinding](#) by people who have dental amalgam fillings.
  - ▶ Eating and gum chewing by people who have dental amalgam fillings.
- During pregnancy, mercury can pass from mother to baby.

### What does the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) say about mercury in dental amalgam?

The [FDA says](#) that exposure to mercury vapor from dental amalgam fillings should not lead to harmful health effects for most people. However, the FDA identified certain groups that may be at greater risk, including:

- Women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or are nursing their babies.
- Children, especially those under age six.
- People with conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease, impaired kidney function, or heightened sensitivity to mercury.

### How can I reduce my exposure to mercury in dental amalgam?

- ✓ Have regular dental checkups and practice good oral hygiene.
- ✓ If you need a tooth filling, talk to your dentist about using [alternatives to dental amalgam](#) that contains mercury. This is especially important for children under age six, and women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or are nursing their babies. This is also important for people who have multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease, impaired kidney function, or heightened sensitivity to mercury.
- ✓ If you have dental amalgam fillings that are in good condition, [avoid having them removed](#).
- ✓ If you have amalgam fillings and grind your teeth, talk to your dentist about possible remedies, such as a mouth guard.

### For more information:

#### General Fact Sheets and Resources

- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - ▶ Dental Amalgam Fillings  
<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/dental-devices/dental-amalgam-fillings>
  - ▶ Treatment Options for Dental Caries  
<https://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/DentalProducts/DentalAmalgam/ucm171108.htm>
  - ▶ FDA Issues Recommendations for Certain High-Risk Groups Regarding Mercury-Containing Dental Amalgam  
<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-issues-recommendations-certain-high-risk-groups-regarding-mercury-containing-dental-amalgam>
- US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)
  - ▶ Mercury in Dental Amalgam  
<http://www.epa.gov/mercury/mercury-dental-amalgam>
- European Commission. Department of Health and Food Safety
  - ▶ Public Health. Tooth Filling Materials  
[http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/opinions\\_layman/en/dental-amalgam/l-3/3-mercury-exposure.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/opinions_layman/en/dental-amalgam/l-3/3-mercury-exposure.htm)

#### Dental Oral Health

- California Dental Association (CDA)
  - ▶ Oral Health Fact Sheets  
<http://www.cda.org/public-resources/patient-fact-sheets>
  - ▶ Amalgam  
[https://www.cda.org/Portals/0/pdfs/fact\\_sheets/amalgam\\_english.pdf](https://www.cda.org/Portals/0/pdfs/fact_sheets/amalgam_english.pdf)
- California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)  
Dental Board of California
  - ▶ The Facts About Fillings  
[http://www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/pub\\_dmfs2004.pdf](http://www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/pub_dmfs2004.pdf)

**Proposition 65**

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)  
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
  - ▶ Proposition 65: Background  
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/faq>
  - ▶ Proposition 65: The List of Chemicals  
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals>
  - ▶ Proposition 65: Fact Sheets  
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets>