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 behavior problems for the child.
- Proposition 65 requires businesses to determine if they must provide a warning about exposures to listed chemicals.

What is dental amalgam?

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

How does exposure to mercury from dental amalgam occur?

- Mercury exposure occurs by breathing low levels of mercury vapors and swallowing during:
  - Placement or removal of dental amalgam fillings.
  - Teeth grinding by people who have dental amalgam fillings.
  - Chewing gum and eating by people who have dental amalgam fillings.
- During pregnancy, mercury can pass to the baby when:
  - The mother has amalgam fillings put in or removed.
  - The mother has amalgam fillings and grinds her teeth.

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

✓ Have regular check-ups and talk to your dentist about good oral hygiene practices.

.Error! Reference source not found. If you have dental amalgam fillings that are in good condition, avoid removal of them.

✓ If you need a tooth filling, talk to your dentist about the characteristics, including strength and longevity, of other restorative materials, such as resin composite, porcelain, and gold alloys.

✓ If you have amalgam fillings and grind your teeth, talk to your dentist about possible remedies (such as a mouth guard).
What does the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) say about mercury in dental amalgam?

The FDA:
✓ Considers dental amalgam fillings safe for adults and children age 6 and above.
✓ Recommends that pregnant women and parents with children under age 6 discuss their concerns with their dentist.

For more information:

Mercury in Dental Amalgam Fact Sheets and Resources:
• US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  ▸ About Dental Amalgam Fillings: [Link]
• European Commission, Department of Health and Food Safety
  ▸ Public Health Tooth Filling Materials: [Link]
• US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  ▸ Mercury in Dental Amalgam: [Link]

Dental Oral Health:
• California Dental Association (CDA)
  ▸ Oral Health Fact Sheets (38 fact sheets in six different languages): [Link]
  ▸ Amalgam: [Link]
• Dental Board of California
  ▸ The Facts About Fillings: [Link]

General Mercury Information:
• US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  ▸ Mercury in Your Environment: [Link]

Proposition 65:
• California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
  Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
  ▸ Proposition 65: Background [Link]
  ▸ Proposition 65: The Chemical List [Link]