

Mercury Amalgam

Mercury is one of the most deadly substances known to man. Its presence in water, air, and food is strictly regulated by the U.S. government. Its use in the mouth, however, is, not regulated. Silver amalgam fillings contain as much as 52 percent mercury.

Tests show that mercury vapor leaks readily from amalgam fillings and is breathed in. The leakage increases whenever the mercury is stimulated by chewing, oral temperature changes, and teeth grinding. Additional mercury exposure occurs when fillings chip, flake off, or are damaged during removal or replacement.

Once in the body, mercury can spread throughout the body and accumulate in vital organs such as the brain, kidneys and the liver. Its presence has been linked to kidney malfunction, irritability, memory loss, inability to concentrate, depression, insomnia, manic depression, anxiousness, damage to brain proteins (which has been linked to Alzheimer's Disease), and fetal damage. The metal transfers readily to fetuses through the placenta and the mother's milk.

In 1991, the World Health Organization acknowledged that amalgam fillings are the predominant human exposure to mercury. Although the FDA has historically maintained that silver amalgam fillings are safe to use, the agency's scientific advisors in 2006 questioned this position for the first time. After listening to testimony and reviewing scientific literature, the advisors voted 13-6 that evidence was insufficient to prove that silver amalgams were safe. The FDA now acknowledges that mercury-containing silver amalgam filling material is likely not safe for children and pregnant women due to potential impacts on developing nervous systems.

Most holistic dentists, including Dr. Bennett – recognizing that brain cells and nervous tissue are constantly renew in the body – believe that mercury in the mouth is never safe. However, many conventional dentists continue to use mercury amalgam fillings.

For patients with existing amalgam fillings, replacing the fillings with other materials can be the best option. Safe removal requires the observance of strict protocols to avoid further contamination from vapors and pieces of fillings. These protocols include isolating involved teeth to prevent metal particles from entering the mouth or being swallowed, and the use of filtration and vacuum systems to provide clean air for patients and dental workers.