

MERCURY IN DENTAL FILLINGS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH, YOUR CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

What is Dental Amalgam?

Dental amalgam is a filling material containing 50% mercury (sometimes inappropriately called a "silver filling"). After it is in your tooth, dental amalgam continues to release mercury vapor. Mercury is linked to serious health problems, including heart disease and neurological problems. Along with gold mining and coal-fired power plants, dental amalgam is among the greatest sources of mercury contamination. The most serious impacts are to the brain, kidneys and nervous systems of unborn and nursing babies and young children.



Mercury is a neurotoxin and is highly destructive to nerve tissue. Other neurotoxins include arsenic and lead. Norway, Sweden and Denmark have banned the use of mercury dental amalgams. Other countries have strict limitations for pregnant and nursing women.

Mercury from dental amalgam and other sources enters the environment, where it pollutes the air, water, and soil.

Mercury builds up in fish and shellfish that humans and other animals eat. There is little or no safe level of consumption for pregnant or nursing women according to the the National Academy of Sciences.



Dental amalgam is used more often in American Indians and Alaska Native than in the general population (73% vs 51% in 2011).

Mercury threatens Indigenous Peoples' rights to subsistence, cultural practices, traditional food systems and health.



Umbilical cord blood can contain almost twice the level of mercury than that found in the mothers' blood.

Developing fetuses, babies and children are especially vulnerable to mercury's neurological impacts, increasing risks to unborn generations.



The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

"States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent." (Article 29/2)

The UN Minamata Treaty on Mercury, finalized in January 2013 and ratified by the US in November 2013, calls for the phase down of dental amalgam use. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), there are currently over 1,000 tons of mercury in the mouths of Americans.



Are there mercury-free dental filling alternatives?

There are many mercury-free filling materials, including composites and glass ionomers (also called white-colored fillings).

Mercury-free fillings can also help preserve natural tooth structure.

Your dentist should inform you of your choices and options!

You have the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, which means you have the right to make informed health decisions for yourself and your family especially if you are of child-bearing age, a mother, or have children. When you visit a dental facility, you have the right to request and receive a mercury-free alternative.

Take ACTION against toxic teeth. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/IITC-Amalg>

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The International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), founded in 1974, is an Indigenous organization working for the protection of human rights, cultures, treaties and traditional lands from the local to the international levels. In 1977, IITC was the first Indigenous organization to receive Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council, and in 2011 was the first to be upgraded to General Consultative Status.

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