

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

We respect our legal obligation to keep health information that identifies you private. We are obligated by law to give you notice of our privacy practices. This Notice describes how we protect your health information and what rights you have regarding it.

TREATMENT, PAYMENT, AND HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS

The most common reason why we use or disclose your health information is for treatment, payment, or health care operations. Examples of how we use or disclose information for treatment purposes are: setting up an appointment for you; examining your teeth; prescribing medications and faxing them to be filled; referring you to another doctor or clinic for other health care or services; or getting copies of your health information from another professional that you may have seen before us. Examples of how we use or disclose your health information for payment purposes are: asking you about your health or dental care plans, or other sources of payment; preparing and sending bills or claims; and collecting unpaid amounts (either ourselves or through a collection agency or attorney). “Health care operations” mean those administrative and managerial functions that we have to do in order to run our office. Examples of how we use or disclose your health information for health care operations are: financial or billing audits; internal quality assurance; personnel decisions; participation in managed care plans; defense of legal matters; business planning; and outside storage of our records.

We routinely use your health information inside our office for these purposes without any special permission. If we need to disclose your health information outside of our office for these reasons, we usually will not ask you for special written permission.

USES AND DISCLOSURES FOR OTHER REASONS WITHOUT PERMISSION

In some limited situations, the law allows or requires us to use or disclose your health information without your permission. Not all of these situations will apply to us; some may never come up at our office at all. Such uses or disclosures are:

- When a state or federal law mandates that certain health information be reported for a specific purpose;
- For public health purposes, such as contagious disease reporting, investigation, or surveillance; and notices to and from the federal Food and Drug Administration regarding drugs or medical devices;
- Disclosures to governmental authorities about victims of suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
- Uses and disclosures for health oversight activities, such as for the licensing of doctors; for audits by Medicare or Medicaid; or for investigation of possible violations of health care laws;
- Disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings, such as in response to subpoenas or orders of courts or administrative agencies;
- Disclosures for law enforcement purposes, such as to provide information about someone who is or is suspected to be a victim of a crime; to provide information about a crime at our office; or to report a crime that happened somewhere else;

- Disclosure to a medical examiner to identify a dead person or to determine the cause of death; or to funeral directors to aid in burial; or to organizations that handle organ or tissue donations;
- Uses or disclosures for health related research;
- Uses and disclosures to prevent a serious threat to health or safety;
- Uses of disclosures for specialized government functions, such as for the protection of the president or high-ranking government officials; for lawful national intelligence activities; for military purposes; or for the evaluation and health of members of the foreign service;
- Disclosures of de-identified information;
- Disclosures relating to worker's compensation programs;
- Disclosures of a "limited data set" for research, public health, or health care operations;
- Incidental disclosures that are an unavoidable by-product of permitted uses or disclosures;
- Disclosures to "business associates" who perform health care operations for us and who commit to respect the privacy of your health information;

Unless you object, we will also share relevant information about your care with your family or friends who are helping you with your dental care.

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

We may call or write to remind you of scheduled appointments, or that it is time to make a routine appointment. We may also call or write to notify you of other treatments or services available at our office that might help you. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will mail you an appointment reminder on a post card, and/or leave you a reminder message on your home answering machine or with someone who answers your phone if you are not at home.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES

We will not make any other uses or disclosures of your health information unless you sign a written "authorization form." The content of an "authorization form" is determined by federal law. Sometimes, we may initiate the authorization process if the use or disclosure is our idea. Sometimes, you may initiate the process if it's your idea for us to send your information to someone else. Typically, in this situation you will give us a properly completed authorization form, or you can use one of ours.

If we initiate the process and ask you to sign an authorization for, you do not have to sign it. If you do not sign the authorization, we cannot make the use or disclosure. If you do sign one, you may revoke it at any time unless we have already acted in reliance upon it. Revocations must be in writing. Send them to the office contact person named at the beginning of this Notice.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

The law gives you many rights regarding your health information. You can:

- Ask us to restrict our uses and disclosures for purposes of treatment (except emergency treatment), payment or health care operations. We do not have to agree to do this, but if we agree, we must honor the restrictions that you want. To ask for a restriction, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax, or E-mail shown at the beginning of this Notice.

- Ask us to communicate with you in a confidential way, such as by phoning you at work rather than at home, by mailing health information to a different address, or by using E-mail to your personal E-mail address. We will accommodate these requests if they are reasonable, and if you pay us for any extra cost. If you want to ask for confidential communications, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or E-mail shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Ask to see or to get photocopies of your health information. By law, there are a few limited situations in which we can refuse to permit access or copying. For the most part, however, you will be able to review or have a copy of your health information within 30 days of asking us (or sixty days if the information is stored off-site). You may have to pay for photocopies in advance. If we deny your request, we will send you a written explanation, and instructions about how to get an impartial review of our denial if one is legally available. By law, we can have one 30-day extension of the time for us to give you access or photocopies if we send you a written notice of the extension. If you want to review or get photocopies of your health information, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or E-mail shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Ask us to amend your health information if you think that it is incorrect or incomplete. If we agree, we will amend the information within 60 days from when you ask us. We will send the corrected information to persons who we know got the wrong information, and others that you specify. If we do not agree, you can write a statement of your position, and we will include it with your health information along with any rebuttal statement that we may write. Once your statement of position and/or our rebuttal is included in your health information, we will send it along whenever we make a permitted disclosure of your health information. By law, we can have one 30-day extension of time to consider a request for amendment if we notify you in writing of the extension. If you want to ask us to amend your health information, send a written request, including your reasons for the amendment, to the office contact person at the address, fax or E-mail shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Get a list of the disclosures that we have made of your health information within the past six years (or a shorter period if you want. By law, the list will not include: disclosures for purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operations; disclosures with your authorization; incidental disclosures; disclosures required by law; and some other limited disclosures. You are entitled to one such list per year without charge. If you want more frequent lists, you will have to pay for them in advance. We will usually respond to your request within 60 days of receiving it, but by law we can have one 30-day extension of time if we notify you of the extension in writing. If you want a list, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or E-mail shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Get additional paper copies of this Notice of Privacy Practices upon request. It does not matter whether you got one electronically or in paper form already. If you want additional paper copies, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or E-mail shown at the beginning of this Notice.

OUR NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

By law, we must abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices until we choose to change it. We reserve the right to change this notice at any time as allowed by law. If we change this Notice, the new privacy practices will apply to your health information that we already have as well as to such

information that we may generate in the future. If we change our Notice of Privacy Practices, we will post the new notice in our office, have copies available in our office, and post it on our website.

COMPLAINTS

If you think that we have not properly respected the privacy of your health information, you are free to complain to us or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. We will not retaliate against you if you make a complaint. If you want to complain to us, send a written complaint to the office contact person at the address, fax, or E0mail shown at the beginning of this Notice. If you prefer, you can discuss your complaint in person or by phone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you want more information about our privacy practices, call or visit the office contact person at the address or phone number shown at the beginning of this Notice.

THE FACTS ABOUT FILLINGS

The following content is provided by

DENTAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

1432 Howe Avenue Sacramento, California 95825

www.dbc.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

5/04

Dental Materials Fact Sheet

What about the Safety of Filling Materials?

Patient health and the safety of dental treatments are the primary goals of California's dental professionals and the Dental Board of California. The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide you with information concerning the risks and benefits of all the dental materials used in the restoration (filling) of teeth.

The Dental Board of California is required by law* to make this dental materials fact sheet available to every licensed dentist in the state of California. Your dentist, in turn, must provide this fact sheet to every new patient and all patients of record only once before beginning any dental filling procedure.

As the patient or parent/guardian, you are strongly encouraged to discuss with your dentist the facts presented concerning the filling materials being considered for your particular treatment.

*Business and Professions Code 1648.10-1648.20

Allergic Reactions to Dental Materials

Components in dental fillings may have side effects or cause allergic reactions, just like other materials we may come in contact with in our daily lives. The risks of such reactions are very low for all types of filling materials. Such reactions can be caused by specific components of the filling materials such as mercury, nickel, chromium, and/or beryllium alloys. Usually, an allergy will reveal itself as a skin rash and is easily reversed when the individual is not in contact with the material.

There are no documented cases of allergic reactions to composite resin, glass ionomer, resin ionomer, or porcelain. However, there have been rare allergic responses reported with dental amalgam, porcelain fused to metal, gold alloys, and nickel or cobalt-chrome alloys.

If you suffer from allergies, discuss these potential problems with your dentist before a filling material is chosen.

Toxicity of Dental Materials

Dental Amalgam

Mercury in its elemental form is on the State of California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to the state to cause reproductive toxicity. Mercury may harm the developing brain of a child or fetus.

Dental amalgam is created by mixing elemental mercury (43-54%) and an alloy powder (46-57%) composed mainly of silver, tin, and copper. This has caused discussion about the risks of mercury in dental amalgam. Such mercury is emitted in minute amounts as vapor. Some concerns have been raised regarding possible toxicity. Scientific research continues on the safety of dental amalgam. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is scant evidence that the health of the vast majority of people with amalgam is compromised.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other public health organizations have investigated the safety of amalgam used in dental fillings. The conclusion: no valid scientific evidence has shown that amalgams cause harm to patients with dental restorations, except in rare cases of allergy. The World Health Organization reached a similar conclusion stating, "Amalgam restorations are safe and cost effective."

A diversity of opinions exists regarding the safety of dental amalgams. Questions have been raised about its safety in pregnant women, children, and diabetics. However, scientific evidence and research literature in peer-reviewed scientific journals suggest that otherwise healthy women, children, and diabetics are not at an increased risk from dental amalgams in their mouths. The FDA places no restrictions on the use of dental amalgam.

Composite Resin

Some Composite Resins include Crystalline Silica, which is on the State of California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to the state to cause cancer.

It is always a good idea to discuss any dental treatment thoroughly with your dentist.

Dental Materials – Advantages & Disadvantages

The durability of any dental restoration is influenced not only by the material it is made from but also by the dentist's technique when placing the restoration. Other factors include the supporting materials used in the procedure and the patient's cooperation during the procedure. The length of time a restoration will last is dependent upon your dental hygiene, home care, and diet and chewing habits.

DENTAL AMALGAM FILLINGS

Dental amalgam is a self-hardening mixture of silver-tin-copper alloy powder and liquid mercury and is sometimes referred to as silver fillings because of its color. It is often used as a filling material and replacement for broken teeth.

Advantages

- Durable; long lasting
- Wears well; holds up well to the forces of biting
- Relatively inexpensive
- Generally completed in one visit
- Self-sealing; minimal-to-no shrinkage and resists leakage
- Resistance to further decay is high, but can be difficult to find in early stages
- Frequency of repair and replacement is low

Disadvantages

- Refer to “What About the Safety of Filling Materials”
- Gray colored, not tooth colored
- May darken as it corrodes; may stain teeth over time
- Requires removal of some healthy tooth
- In larger amalgam fillings, the remaining tooth may weaken and fracture
- Because metal can conduct hot and cold temperatures, there may be a temporary sensitivity to hot and cold.
- Contact with other metals may cause occasional, minute electrical flow

COMPOSITE RESIN FILLINGS

Composite fillings are a mixture of powdered glass and plastic resin, sometimes referred to as white, plastic, or tooth-colored fillings. It is used for fillings, inlays, veneers, partial and complete crowns, or to repair portions of broken teeth.

Advantages

- Strong and durable
- Tooth colored
- Single visit for fillings
- Resists breaking
- Maximum amount of tooth preserved
- Small risk of leakage if bonded only to enamel
- Does not corrode
- Generally holds up well to the forces of biting depending on product used
- Resistance to further decay is moderate and easy to find
- Frequency of repair or replacement is low to moderate

Disadvantages

- Refer to “What About the Safety of Filling Materials”
- Moderate occurrence of tooth sensitivity; sensitive to dentist’s method of application
- Costs more than dental amalgam
- Material shrinks when hardened and could lead to further decay and/or temperature sensitivity
- Requires more than one visit for inlays, veneers, and crowns
- May wear faster than dental enamel
- May leak over time when bonded beneath the layer of enamel

GLASS IONOMER CEMENT

Glass ionomer cement is a self-hardening mixture of glass and organic acid. It is tooth-colored and varies in translucency. Glass ionomer is usually used for small fillings, cementing metal and porcelain/metal crowns, liners, and temporary restorations.

Advantages

- Reasonably good esthetics
- May provide some help against decay because it releases fluoride
- Minimal amount of tooth needs to be removed and it bonds well to both the enamel and the dentin beneath the enamel
- Material has low incidence of producing tooth sensitivity
- Usually completed in one dental visit

Disadvantages

- Cost is very similar to composite resin (which costs more than amalgam)
- Limited use because it is not recommended for biting surfaces in permanent teeth
- As it ages, this material may become rough and could increase the accumulation of plaque and chance of periodontal disease
- Does not wear well; tends to crack over time and can be dislodged

RESIN IONOMER CEMENT

Resin ionomer cement is a mixture of glass and resin polymer and organic acid that hardens with exposure to a blue light used in the dental office. It is tooth colored but more translucent than glass ionomer cement. It is most often used for small fillings, cementing metal and porcelain metal crowns and liners.

Advantages

- Very good esthetics
- May provide some help against decay because it releases fluoride
- Minimal amount of tooth needs to be removed and it bonds well to both the enamel and the dentin beneath the enamel
- Good for non-biting surfaces
- May be used for short-term primary teeth restorations
- May hold up better than glass ionomer but not as well as composite
- Good resistance to leakage
- Material has low incidence of producing tooth sensitivity
- Usually completed in one dental visit

Disadvantages

- Cost is very similar to composite resin (which costs more than amalgam)
- Limited use because it is not recommended to restore the biting surfaces of adults
- Wears faster than composite and amalgam

PORCELAIN (CERAMIC)

Porcelain is a glass-like material formed into fillings or crowns using models of the prepared teeth. The material is tooth-colored and is used in inlays, veneers, crowns, and fixed bridges.

Advantages

- Very little tooth needs to be removed for use as a veneer; more tooth needs to be removed for a crown because its strength is related to its bulk (size)
- Good resistance to further decay if the restoration fits well
- Is resistant to surface wear but can cause some wear on opposing teeth
- Resists leakage because it can be shaped for a very accurate fit
- The material does not cause tooth sensitivity

Disadvantages

- Material is brittle and can break under biting forces
- May not be recommended for molar teeth
- Higher cost because it requires at least two office visits and laboratory services

NICKEL OR COBALT-CHROME ALLOYS

Nickel or cobalt-chrome alloys are mixtures of nickel and chromium. They are a dark silver metal color and are used for crowns and fixed bridges and most partial denture frameworks.

Advantages

- Good resistance to further decay if the restoration fits well
- Excellent durability; does not fracture under stress
- Does not corrode in the mouth
- Minimal amount of tooth needs to be removed
- Resists leakage because it can be shaped for a very accurate fit

Disadvantages

- Is not tooth colored; alloy is a dark silver metal color
- Conducts heat and cold; may irritate sensitive teeth
- Can be abrasive to opposing teeth
- High cost; requires at least two office visits and laboratory services
- Slightly higher wear to opposing teeth

PORCELAIN FUSED TO METAL

This type of porcelain is a glass-like material that is “enameled” on top of metal shells. It is tooth-colored and is used for crowns and fixed bridges

Advantages

- Good resistance to further decay if the restoration fits well
- Very durable, due to metal substructure
- The material does not cause tooth sensitivity
- Resists leakage because it can be shaped for a very accurate fit

Disadvantages

- More tooth must be removed (than for porcelain) for the metal substructure
- Higher cost because it requires at least two office visits and laboratory services

GOLD ALLOY

Gold alloy is a gold-colored mixture of gold, copper, and other metals and is used mainly for crowns and fixed bridges and some partial denture frameworks

Advantages

- Good resistance to further decay if the restoration fits well
- Excellent durability; does not fracture under stress
- Does not corrode in the mouth
- Minimal amount of tooth needs to be removed
- Wears well; does not cause excessive wear to opposing teeth
- Resists leakage because it can be shaped for a very accurate fit

Disadvantages

- Is not tooth colored; alloy is yellow
- Conducts heat and cold; may irritate sensitive teeth
- High cost; requires at least two office visits and laboratory services