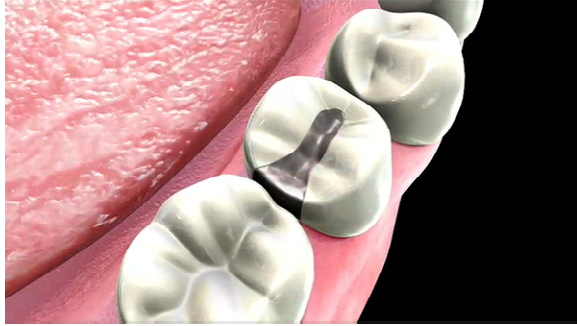


Amalgam Fillings



What Is A Cavity? & Why Did You Get One?

Cavities, as their name implies, are essentially holes in your teeth caused by decay. You can sometimes spot a cavity, as the area surrounding the hole generally looks dark brown or gray.

The main culprits to blame for your cavity are certain types of bacteria in your mouth. These bacteria are contained in plaque and they interact with the carbohydrates and sugars in your food creating an acidic environment that dissolves the protective enamel on the outer layer of your tooth. Once the acid succeeds in eroding the enamel, your tooth is exposed, leaving just the softer dentin layer, which will ultimately cause the formation of a cavity. At this point the decay process rapidly speeds up and spreads deeper into the tooth.

Why Do I Need A Filling?

A filling is necessary to treat your cavity because if left untreated the decay will eventually grow and will enter into your nerve canal. And yes, this can be as painful as it sounds. It can also lead to more serious problems such as infection or abscess.

A filling may also be needed to replace or repair an old worn down existing filling or to fix a chipped tooth.

In addition to potential pain and discomfort and possible tooth loss, if you wait to have your cavity filled it may end up requiring a more difficult process, such as a root canal, to save your tooth. And it could also cost you a lot more money to fix. The bottom line is you should get your cavity filled as soon as you can.

Amalgam (Silver) Fillings

Amalgam is a silver metallic filling that is used mainly to fill cavities in the back teeth. It is one of the most commonly used filling materials since it is very strong and lasts a long time. Amalgam is made out of a combination of metals such as silver, mercury and tin.

Once the tooth has been filled the filling is checked to insure the proper alignment and shape. At this point any necessary adjustments are made to ensure proper functionality. Following the filling you should avoid biting or chewing on the filling for at least 24 hours until it completely hardens.

New Amalgam Filling Expectations

Following the filling procedure it is very common to experience some discomfort, normally at the site of the anesthetic or at the tooth itself. To alleviate the discomfort you can follow your dentists recommendation on taking an over the counter pain medication. In addition, you may experience sensitivity to cold foods and drinks. This sensitivity should resolve in a few days but if your symptoms persist then you should visit your dentist.

In some cases the decay could be quite deep and close to the nerve of the tooth. In these instances the nerve could already be infected with bacteria. Even though a filling has been placed, there is still a good chance that the tooth may need to go under root canal therapy to relieve the discomfort.