

November, 2008

**The Center for Premier
Dentistry welcomes
new patients.**

Our state-of-the-art center and highly skilled team ensures the highest quality of dental care for you and your family. From infants to seniors we provide personalized care and offer a unique dental experience that is fun, affordable, interactive, and effective. We maintain a commitment to our patients in every facet of our practice.

*Give us a call today at **941.924.7571** or inquire online to learn more about our techniques, staff and facility:*



*I'd like more
information about the
Center for Premier Dentistry.*

**5100 Station Way
Sarasota, FL 34233**

Your Dental Health ... My Silver Fillings

Often times we hear many different questions pertaining to patient's "Silver Fillings" and I would like to take this opportunity to shed some truths on this topic. "Silver Fillings" as many patients refer to them are called amalgam fillings in the dental world. These types of filling are and were made out of a number of different metals; silver, copper, nickel, tin and also mercury. The mercury content was needed to mix the metals together into a paste and then allowed it to set up into a solid form after about 5 minutes. The mercury content is also the most controversial and talked about portion of these amalgams.

There have been talk shows, magazine articles, seminars and various other forms of media that have inferred that this mercury then leaches out over a number of years and into our bodies. Simply put there is some truth to these statements. The important facts to pay attention to are how this happens, when this happens and actually how much mercury we are exposed to?

As amalgam is packed into a tooth and onto itself it is condensed. This process which is done at the time of placing the filling produces the largest quantities of mercury. These quantities are being produced by the procedure and the dentist performing them, therefore they are controlled as much as possible. The first thing to explain is as this procedure is happening the dentist has isolated the tooth with either a rubber dam or a clear dry field created by cotton and he or she utilizes a high speed evacuation system or suction to collect all of the leached mercury at this time. So, at this time the patient is not exposed to too much mercury at all.

As this filling is put into function over the years, the condensing process still happens in a minute or microscopic proportion and the mercury released by this process is minimal. It has been said by many that there is usually more mercury in the foods we eat than in the fillings we have in our teeth. So, over the years we are actually exposed to very little mercury from our "Silver Fillings". To date there has been extensive peer reviewed research, performed by many teaching institutions and The American Dental Association and all have found an overall mercury release amount so low that it is considered clinically insignificant. This, however, is not to mean that "Silver Fillings" do not come with risks.

Through these years of research and clinical observation we have come to realize that the risks or short comings in amalgam filling is not from the mercury content or release but rather from the physical properties of the material itself. As an amalgam filling sits in your mouth it is exposed to hundreds or even thousands of thermo-cycles per day. Every time the filling is presented with a hot or cold food or liquid it expands and contracts at a rate much higher than natural tooth structure thus causing fracturing of the tooth structure. Amalgam fillings also do not bond or adhere to tooth structure. This quality makes this type of filling leaky. On a microscopic level there is a space between the amalgam filling and the tooth. Freely flowing through this space is fluid, bacteria and carbohydrates, the very things that created the tooth decay in the first part. So as dentists, we see a tremendous amount of fracturing and recurrent decay around these "Silver Fillings". It is due to these reasons that we here at the Center for Premier Dentistry no longer use amalgam as a filling material. Instead, we utilize a white or tooth colored resin filling material that expands and contracts at the same rate as natural tooth structure, eliminating the fracturing process. It bonds to the tooth, in turn sealing it off from the fluid, bacteria and carbohydrates that cause dental decay.

Today's modern advances offer you and your dentist a number of different options and ways to restore teeth. If you have questions regarding the new restorative materials or your old fillings feel free to contact us here at the Center for Premier Dentistry where we are happy to answer them for you.

Scott Dickinson, D.M.D.