

Why Composites?

As a health care professional, we are dedicated to delivering to you the best treatment available and that includes *only* using composite material for filling restorations, not amalgam, in our dental office.

The Benefits of Using Composites:

- **More conservative** – With a composite restoration, only the decayed part of the tooth needs to be removed. Amalgam restorations require more removal of tooth structure in order to retain the filling within the tooth itself.
- **Directly bonded to the tooth** – Unlike the amalgam restoration, the composite restoration is directly bonded to the tooth. Therefore, the tooth holds the filling as well as the filling supporting the remaining tooth structure.
- **Minimizes “leaking”** – The bonding system provides a seal between the tooth and the restoration, virtually eliminating micro-leakage, unlike amalgam that can begin to fail over time. Composites also promote better healing of the damaged tooth.
- **Less post-operative sensitivity** – The bonding system of the composite restoration seals the tooth structure that normally causes post-operative sensitivity. This, along with the low thermal conductivity of the material, virtually eliminates any post-operative sensitivity.
- **Less repair** – Should there be a failure of the restoration or small fracture of the tooth structure, the problem can be repaired *without* the removal of the entire existing restoration. A small, conservative preparation can be made as the composite can be bonded to the existing composite restoration. With amalgam, the whole existing restoration needs to be removed which also leads to a more expensive repair or root canal.
- **Can be used with crowns** – In the event the tooth needs to be crowned, the composite restoration provides a vital base for proper restoration. Amalgam does not provide this benefit.
- **Composite material is durable** – The composite restoration exhibits enough compressive strength to provide for adequate chewing of food. It also has more tensile strength and is more resistant to fracture than amalgam.
- **Composite material is bio-inert** – An amalgam is an alloy of copper, tin, zinc, silver and mercury. Therefore it reacts with saliva over time. Composite materials do not.
- **“No more silver smile!”** – And finally, there is the esthetic value of a “tooth colored” restoration. There are no longer any gray shaded teeth or large metal fillings showing in your smile.

Therefore, a well-placed composite restoration is beneficial to your dental health!



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Dental Insurance & Composites:

I got a composite filling on my molar, but they only paid for an amalgam!

At this time, most insurance plans cover the cost of composite restorations to their percentages and limitations; however, there are still many dental plans out there that will change the code to an amalgam on a posterior tooth. Their reasoning is that the amalgam material is considered an acceptable method of restoration. Usually these type of plans also instill deductibles and coverage limitations, even on amalgam restorations. Why? Because this enables them to market a lower cost plan to those purchasing them...employers. Another reason is their bottom line. No insurance company is guaranteed they will hold an employer's business the following year, so the less they pay today, the better their financials.

Insurance companies do not care about your dental health; we do! They view composite restorations as purely “esthetic” and do not care about the benefits the treatment offers. The trend by dentists today is away from the use of amalgam (*many dentists today have amalgam free offices*) but as long as the ADA considers amalgam restoration an acceptable form of treatment (versus none), the insurance companies will continue this practice.

In the long run, restorative composites ultimately save money through less repair cost and possible avoidance of root canals, etc.

So which is better for you?