

I am often asked by patients whether they should be concerned about the mercury in their silver fillings. Silver or **amalgam** fillings are nearly 50% mercury and mercury is a very toxic substance. It has been shown that mercury is released from fillings in minute amounts, especially when chewing. The significant question here is, "Are the amounts released from fillings enough to pose a threat to health?" This question remains controversial.



The American Dental Association has stated that there is **no research** showing causative connection between mercury released from dental fillings and any disease, and that the occurrence of allergy to mercury is extremely rare. This is a fair statement because it is difficult to prove a cause and effect relationship. However there is Research showing an increase in the body's burden of mercury after placement of silver fillings. There is also research showing that systemic levels of mercury increase with the number of silver fillings present.



So what is a person to do? If you have questions about your body's burden of toxic metals, Dr. O'Rielly recommends getting tested by a trained medical practitioner. This is doubly important for people with a high level of sensitivity to metals, mold and sugar intake.

It cannot be disputed that mercury is a toxic substance at best. Doctors consider it and other metals like aluminum, lead and cadmium to be high on the list of materials to be monitored and targeted in any detoxification program, as they can be harmful to human tissue. However I always recommend that a physician be contacted whenever there are concerns about toxic and/or diseased conditions of the body.



From a strictly dental perspective, it is advisable to replace silver fillings that are old because the metal in the amalgam compound can begin to discolor and even cause hairline fractures in the tooth structure. As far as the actual removal of amalgam fillings, I can offer the following guidelines for a holistic and biological approach:

1. When the time comes to replace a filling because of new decay or wear, then consider other materials available like resin, porcelain and in some situations, gold.
2. When you remove an old amalgam (silver) filling, make sure it is done with a rubberdam. This is a simple technique isolating the tooth being worked on from the rest of your mouth. It will prevent the swallowing of any metal particles.
3. Try to find a holistic or biological dentist who is aware of compatibility testing for dental materials.
4. If you are considering removing useable amalgam fillings because of mercury, it is always a good idea to get evaluated for **metal toxicity** first by a qualified health care practitioner. This will determine tolerance for the materials currently in your mouth.

At Integrative Dentistry we follow a strict protocol for metal removal including rubber dam, pure air through a nosepiece, supplemental filtration and access to fresh air. We also provide information about detoxification and referrals to appropriate practitioners for any necessary follow up treatment. For more information please call the Integrative Dental Practice at (760) 632-1304

Our goal is to provide holistic and biological dental care in a non-toxic environment to support our patients in their quest to become metal-free.

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