



# TAYLOR DENTISTRY

## Filling Materials

These days, there are many different choices of materials for restoring teeth. Choosing the best one for you involves several different factors including:

- size of the decay
- location of the decay
- brushing and flossing habits of the patient
- the composition of the material
- the chewing force expected on the tooth
- esthetic considerations
- cost
- number of appointments necessary
- durability of the materials



The following is a summary of some of the choices of dental materials. If you have questions, please just ask us.

### **Amalgam (Silver fillings)**

Silver has been used successfully in dentistry for more than 100 years. Its advantages include durability, reasonably easy placement, and it is economical compared to several other materials. Its main disadvantage is that it is not as natural looking as some other materials. Amalgam is considered safe by most authorities. The American Dental Association states, "...the major U.S. and international scientific and health bodies, including the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Public Health Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization, among others have been satisfied that dental amalgam is a safe, reliable and effective restorative material."<sup>1</sup>



### **Composite (Tooth colored fillings)**

Composites have made substantial improvements in recent years. The color matching for front teeth is very good, color stability is very good, and the durability and wear characteristics are also very good. For back teeth, composite fillings are best if they are of small or moderate size. Composites take longer to place and must be bonded without exposure to saliva or other contaminants.

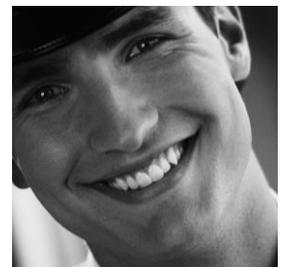


### **Ionomers**

Ionomers are tooth colored fillings that are generally used for cavities on roots or as a filling material on baby teeth. Some of these materials will release fluoride which benefits patients with a high risk of decay. However, ionomers do not have good wear resistance so they are not good choices for decay on the chewing surfaces.

### **All Porcelain (Ceramics)**

Porcelain, ceramics, and glasslike materials can be used for inlays, onlays (partial crowns), crowns, and veneers. These materials are esthetic because they look very similar to natural tooth enamel. They are also the material of choice when a filling may be too large for composite (tooth colored) or amalgam filling mentioned above. In the past, better esthetics was a compromise for the weaker structure and risk of fracture of the ceramics. However, great strides have been made in the strength of these porcelains, which now can be made stronger and resist even the strongest of bites.



### **Gold and Other Metals**

Gold has been a traditional material in dentistry because of its excellent strength, durability, and close adaptation to the tooth. Gold resists discoloration and tarnishing, and may be used for inlays, onlays, crowns, and bridges. However, gold has become expensive which has decreased its use in dentistry. In gold's place, high strength ceramics are now used with more frequency. Metals are still commonly used under the porcelain of bridges to provide strength.

1. <http://www.ada.org/public/topics/fillings.asp>

