

TOOTH-COLOURED FILLINGS INFORMATION

The move from traditional to tooth-coloured fillings

Traditional filling material, or amalgam, is silvery-grey. It is long-lasting and has been used successfully by dentists for many years. Although scientific opinion is that traditional fillings are perfectly safe, some dentists and patients are concerned about their mercury content. Of course, it's sometimes cosmetically unacceptable to have a traditional filling too – particularly in teeth close to the front of your mouth.

Choosing what is right for you

Tooth-coloured fillings match the colour of your teeth making them a good choice if you're concerned about the appearance of your filling. This cosmetic advantage makes them the clear choice for front teeth. They can also be the best choice for small fillings in back teeth because they often mean your dentist doesn't have to remove as much of your tooth to put in the filling.

What are the disadvantages?

Tooth-coloured filling material is bonded to the teeth with durable adhesive. They are partly plastic and the plastic element can wear more quickly than the metal in traditional fillings, so your filling might need to be replaced sooner than an amalgam one. Tooth-coloured fillings aren't strong enough for very large gaps or large volumes, especially in the long-term. Harder wearing alternatives are available such as crowns or inlays. Please ask for further details.

P.T.O.

Tooth-coloured fillings can discolour because they are plastic, but they can be polished or resurface quite easily in most cases.

Tooth-coloured fillings can take longer to do and your dentist will need to make sure that no moisture gets into the filling as it's being fitted.

Some patients experience sensitivity after a tooth-coloured filling. Ask your dentist if you believe there is a particular risk for you.

A tooth-coloured filling will probably cost more than the equivalent traditional filling, because it usually takes longer to complete.

After your filling

Your dentist will discuss any possible complications with you, although it's not always possible to predict whether a filling will be successful. If further treatment is necessary, it might mean using a different material, such as creating a crown from porcelain or gold. Occasionally, root canal treatment, might be necessary if the tooth doesn't settle well after a filling.