



TYPES OF FILLING MATERIALS

The Smile Clinic

General filling information

It is very important to remember that any tooth substance removal and subsequently filling has an element of risk of damaging the pulp of the tooth. The heat from the preparation, exposing the inner tooth surfaces to the bacteria in the mouth or simply the depth of the required preparation. This may, although rarely, lead to the requirement of root canal treatment and possibly extraction of the tooth. It is for this reason elective tooth restoration should be carefully considered and any other necessary treatment needs to be discussed with your dentist

This leaflet provides you with the information to make an informed decision on which type of restorative material is best for you. Please be aware not all options are available on the NHS in which case your dentist at The Smile Clinic will be able to offer you the private option. Choosing the private option will not affect your NHS registration at the practice and your entitlement to future NHS treatments

It is a matter of personal preference. At The Smile Clinic we will provide you with all the options in this booklet and if you find yourself being confused, please discuss this with your dentist.

What to consider in making the decision

Can I see the filling when I smile?

Am I fine to have a silver filling in my mouth?

Do I understand the relevance of the silver filling not bonding to the tooth?

How much will it cost and is it in my budget?

Amalgam - Metal fillings

Advantages

Available on the NHS for the molar and premolars teeth and the most widely used filling material for load bearing teeth.

Disadvantages

The filling does not bond to the tooth tissue and therefore additional good tooth needs to be removed to provide mechanical retention for the filling
Bacteria can develop under existing fillings from the gap between the filling and tooth.

The aesthetics are poor and as they do not bond to the remaining tooth structure, the walls of the remaining tooth can fracture requiring further treatment.
Although the research is inconclusive, there have been concerns with amalgam fillings and mercury toxicity.

Composite fillings- white fillings

Advantages

No mercury present
Colour match to provide excellent aesthetics
No excessive cavity preparation and lower risk of secondary caries as the filling is adhesive
Strength of composites are now comparable to the strength of amalgam
Adhesive material which bonds to the remaining tooth to reinforce and strengthen the remaining tooth substance causing fewer fractures from weaknesses in the tooth

Disadvantages

Not available on the molar and premolars teeth on the NHS but can be provided by your dentist as a private treatment
Can cause some post operative sensitivity which can take a number of weeks to settle
The colour stability is researched to around 5-10 years after which the colour match deteriorates and the filling may need replacing for cosmetic reasons. Materials are being enhanced and the colour stability is much better today than it was 5 years ago

Glass ionomers

Advantages

Continuously release fluoride helping strengthen the remaining tooth structure
Adhesive filling reducing the need for cavity preparations

Disadvantages

Not strong enough for the load bearing areas of the posterior teeth
Small failure rate when the filling doesn't reach an adequate bond with the tooth