



Student Health Services
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<http://shs.osu.edu>

WHAT SHOULD I CHOOSE? Silver (Amalgam) or White (Composite) Fillings

Dental restorations, whether silver (amalgam) or white (composite), will have a variable life span depending on:

- Oral health care (brushing, flossing, and eating habits)
- Negative habits (tobacco, drug use, high consumption of soda, sports drinks and non-fluoridated water)
- The oral chemistry of your mouth
- Medications (anti-anxiety, antidepressants, and certain blood pressure drugs)
- Stress (grinding and clenching)
- Size of the restoration
- Proper choice of material

The final choice of filling material is determined by the patient. In some rare situations, the dentist may have to determine the best choice for your tooth.

Pros and Cons for Amalgam and Composite Fillings

Pros:

Amalgam

- Used for many years with great success
- Takes less time to place
- Harder for chewing
- Less expensive (see Dental Services Mgr for pricing)
- Acceptable standard of care

Composite

- Esthetics
- Bonded to tooth
- More conservative (less tooth structure removed)
- Acceptable standard of care

Cons:

Amalgam

- Can fracture over time
- More tooth structure removed
- Darkness of the filling can show through enamel
- Contains mix of metal (mercury, silver, copper, zinc)

Composite

- Takes more time to be placed
- Less durable than amalgam
- Should not be used for extra-large fillings
- Not as hard as amalgam

Additional Online Information

ADA.org/1741.aspx

ADA.org/4700.aspx

FDA.gov/Medical Devices/Products and Medical Procedures/Dental Products/Dental/Amalgam/UCM171094.htm