

SAVE YOUR TEETH, SAVE YOUR LIFE

**GOOD STANDARDS: MERCURY-FREE**

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# THE GOOD DENTIST

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## MERCURY FREE DENTISTRY

**Figure 3.1** A healthy smile speaks for itself.



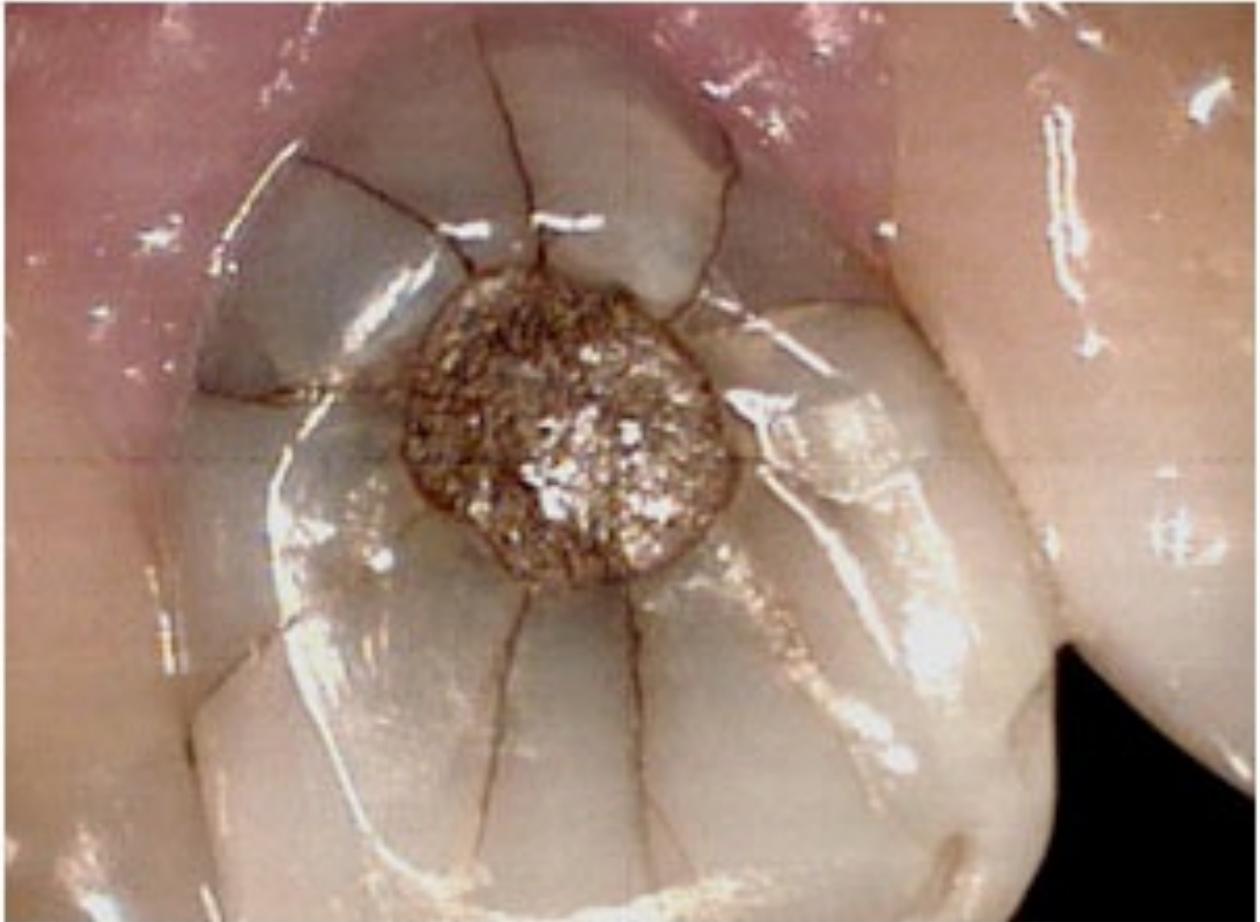
*Notice this healthy smile has no mercury amalgam fillings. This is the ideal for everyone.*

In oral-systemic dentistry, mercury amalgam fillings are not tolerated. Mercury is considered an unsafe dental material. If you look at the [Periodic Table of Toxic Elements](#) (click Hg), you will see mercury along with arsenic and lead. How can any amount of such a toxic substance be safe to put in anyone's mouth?

The American Dental Association (ADA) states that mercury is a "safe" dental material because it is mixed in an amalgam with silver and some other metals (like tin and copper), that supposedly makes the volatile mercury "stable." However, ask any dentist who has been in practice for 10 years what she or he sees under old mercury fillings, and they will tell you that it is common to see mercury has leached into the tooth over time, causing the tooth to turn grey. The ADA says it doesn't leach, but I've seen it over and over in clinical practice.

Imagine what happens every time someone with mercury amalgam fillings drinks a cup of hot coffee or chews hot food. There is heat and friction. Imagine if that person chews hot food and then drinks a cold drink. There's expansion and contraction. The tendency is that over time, the margin between the amalgam filling and the tooth will widen, inviting recurrent decay and causing more drilling and more loss of tooth. Remember also that mercury is a liquid at room temperature, so when heated from chewing, brushing and drilling, it will vaporize. It can be inhaled directly into the lungs and swallowed into the stomach and gut.

Mercury amalgam also tends to cause teeth to fracture because it expands with heat. As a dentist, I can tell you how common it is to see fractures in teeth caused by mercury amalgam fillings. Do a Google search for "mercury amalgam cracked" and see what I'm talking about. You'll find lots of pictures that look like this.



Many people may wonder why they are always in the dentist chair for another cavity, no matter how good their oral hygiene is, or how careful they are with their diet, or how much nutrient-rich foods they are eating. They may not realize that their mercury amalgam fillings are the problem. When conventionally trained dentists say leave the mercury amalgam fillings in your mouth, they are not telling you that if you do, there's a good chance those teeth will degenerate over time, repeatedly suffering recurrent decay, fractures and cracking. Conventional dentists accept this gradual decline, offering a cap when the tooth cracks. Or later offering a root canal when a tooth gets infected from a fracture. Systemic dentists prefer not to go down that path, and prefer instead to remove the mercury amalgams sooner than later to minimize damage to teeth and to the whole person.

In every way, mercury amalgam is a poor choice for a dental material. There are much better, biomimetic dental materials, which I will discuss in the next chapter, but none are as cheap as mercury amalgam. As I said earlier, there have been legal, although in my opinion unlawful, gag laws in place in many states in the United States that put the burden on consumers of dentistry to inform themselves by reading books like this or doing their own research online. Because the burden for safety is placed on consumers in this way, it's very urgent that people who are informed spread the word within each family and community.

Having metals in your mouth that are close to the major neural circuits of the brain and central nervous system is another major problem with mercury-silver amalgam fillings. The same is true for caps made of gold that are placed on top of or adjacent to mercury-silver fillings. In the mouth, the combination of positive and

negative charges from the two different metals creates a [galvanic effect](#), basically creating a battery-like charge in your mouth that can disturb your body's natural electrical charge. That is a concern for everyone, but it should be a primary concern for patients with [epilepsy](#). It should also be of concern to anyone with Alzheimer's, or any other degenerative neurological disorder. I have found in my clinical practice that when we remove a galvanic effect in a patient's mouth, cognitive function gets better immediately.

In an environment full of a wide variety of metals, synergistic toxicity is also a problem that the ADA is not calculating for when it continues to say that mercury amalgam fillings are safe. Studies with rats showed that the amount of mercury to kill one out of 100 rats, when mixed with 1/20th of the amount of lead it took to kill one rat in 100, killed all 100 rats. Another problem that the ADA is not recognizing is allergic reactions that develop slowly over a long period of time. Dr. Christopher Shade, an expert on mercury chemistry and detox chemistry, points out that the synergistic effects help explain why one person who is over the EPA limit for mercury exposure seems to show no symptoms whereas another person who has far less exposure is struggling with multiple symptoms. According to Dr. Shade, these are called [Type 4 delayed hypersensitivities](#), and they are very well documented.

Mercury amalgam removal followed by heavy metal detox should, in my opinion, be standard protocol whenever dealing with a patient who has a degenerative neurological disorder, or a history of that in their family. The galvanic effect aside, mercury itself has been shown to directly affect the ability to grow new neurons. Professor Fritz Lorscheider, the same researcher who did the sheep study showing that mercury moves quickly throughout the body just from chewing, also took advantage of some research being done in a nearby lab to demonstrate the effect of even minute amounts of mercury on the growth of new nerve cells.

The research going on in the lab next door involved making digital time lapse photographs of in-vitro neurites. The time lapse showed that neurites grow by first creating a cytoskeleton within which the new neuron develops. Professor Lorscheider had the idea to film what happens when a growing neuron is exposed to a tiny amount of mercury, less than what would be commonly found in the saliva of a person with mercury amalgam fillings. [The time lapse showed nerve cell death](#). Specifically, it showed how the stiff cytoskeletal tube that grows from a neurite growth cone, made of a [protein called tubulin, collapsed with mercury exposure](#). Many doctors who learned of Professor Lorscheider's research immediately understood the implications of this information for Alzheimer's, because the brains of Alzheimer's patients are riddled with disorganized masses of tubulin.

[Symptoms of mercury toxicity](#) can vary widely. The phrase "mad as a hatter" comes to mind, which refers to the crazy behaviors associated with English workers who shaped felt hats in the 18th and 19th centuries who developed dementia. I often wonder how many people who are being treated for mental health disorders have high mercury toxicity from dental amalgam fillings. Wouldn't that be fantastic if psychiatrists included dental exams with a systemic dentist and a heavy metal test before diagnosing and prescribing psychotropic drugs for a patient? Doesn't that make sense? But that is not the standard of care at all.

Elemental and vaporized mercury poisoning symptoms include mood swings, irritability, insomnia, headaches, kidney malfunction, gut issues and loss of cognitive function, memory loss, poor impulse control, and impairments of speech, hearing and peripheral vision. A few scientific publications have even linked mercury toxicity to endometriosis and high blood pressure. With chronic mercury poisoning the symptoms can come on so gradually that often it's hard to pinpoint what is happening. Mercury poisoning is a critical issue in the birth community, because many pregnant women have mercury amalgam fillings, and mercury can be passed to their fetuses through the placenta.

Many European countries took the mercury neurite studies at face value and banned mercury amalgam fillings. Sweden, Switzerland, and Belgium all banned the use of mercury in dentistry. Germany stopped the practice back in 1994, and Germany was once the largest manufacturer of mercury fillings in the world. The United States has lagged far behind the Europeans in regard to dental mercury, partly due to the influence of the American Dental Association and its dogged insistence that mercury amalgam fillings are safe—in spite of overwhelming evidence that it is not.

**If you have mercury-silver amalgam fillings and choose to have them removed, it's extremely important that you choose a dentist who knows how to remove them safely and who has the skill level and equipment to accomplish this task.**

You need to find a systemic dentist who is experienced in minimally-invasive procedures and fully trained in biomimetic dentistry. Exposure to mercury vapor from drilling amalgam fillings is dangerous, and unfortunately, dental schools under the influence of the ADA do not teach a proper safety protocol, even though a very good protocol for safe mercury filling removal has been established by the International Association of Oral Medicine and Toxicology. So it's quite possible, and highly likely, to go to a dentist for removal of mercury amalgam fillings and get someone who doesn't know how to do it safely. The patient, the dentist, and the staff end up getting exposed to dangerous mercury vapor. Do your research and find a good dentist—one who is properly trained and experienced.

As I said, at the high temperatures reached when drilling, mercury vaporizes rapidly and can be inhaled. As a patient and a conscious consumer, it is your responsibility to listen carefully to the subtext when you talk to a dentist. If your dentist says it's safer to leave mercury fillings in rather than take them out, what is really being said is that he or she doesn't know how to take them out safely. Listen to that. Accept that.

Look for a dentist who feels confident in the safety protocols in place at his or her practice—and who has the training and experience to protect you and your teeth. Some patients who go to a dentist to have amalgam fillings removed may discover fractures under or around those fillings, and those fractures can cause more problems. Sometimes additional fractures can be created in the process of removing old fillings. So you need someone very skilled and experienced who also has the tools, equipment and methods to minimize damage to the tooth's structural integrity. The good dentist you're looking for won't have a lot of patients walking around with root canals. Or mercury amalgam fillings. And they won't be drilling a lot of mercury amalgam. I like to get underneath amalgam fillings and pop them out with minimal drilling.

Once you find a dentist who feels confident and knows exactly why you want your mercury fillings removed and how to do it safely, you then have to take the responsibility to verify that the dentist is representing his or her skills and experience accurately. Ask detailed questions to determine the level of skill and if the dentist has the equipment to do the job properly and safely with minimum stress on the tooth and minimum loss of tooth structure. It's your responsibility to ask questions before you get in the dentist's chair.

In Chapter 5, *Good Protocols*, I devote an entire section to “**Safe Mercury Filling Removal**” so every one can see what the safety protocol looks like in detail. I've included pictures there. Please read this section carefully before picking a dentist to remove mercury amalgam fillings so that you know what to look for and ask for when you choose your dentist. See Chapter 6, “Finding a Good Dentist,” for a list of questions to guide you as well as a list of good dental organizations that have the right values and mission that provide practitioner directories.

You can also ask the dentist you are interviewing if there are other patients who have had the same treatment you are looking for who are willing to talk to you on the phone or by email. Remember, there are a lot of

weekend warriors out there. These are dentists who have taken a workshop or two and call themselves “holistic” dentists, but who don’t really have the skill level, equipment, or safety protocols in place. Only you can make the final judgment call as to whether that dentist is the one for you, your child, your parent, or a grandparent. It’s your decision.