

White fillings



Why should I consider white fillings?

Most people have fillings of one sort or another in their mouths.

Nowadays fillings can be natural looking, as well as doing the job they're meant to do. Many people don't want silver fillings that show when they laugh or smile because they stand out more and make you more conscious about the way you look.



Are white fillings expensive?

Many white fillings are classed as a 'cosmetic' treatment; you can only have them done privately. Costs can vary quite a lot depending on the size and type of white filling used, and the time it takes to carry out the treatment. Your dentist will be able to give you an idea of the cost before you agree to the treatment.

Are they as good as silver amalgam fillings?

White fillings have always been considered less long lasting than silver amalgam fillings. But there are now new materials that are almost as good as silver amalgam, and these are proving to be very successful. How long a white filling lasts for depend a lot on where it is in your mouth and how heavily your teeth come together when you bite and chew. The dentist can give you an idea on how long your fillings should last.

What are tooth-coloured fillings made of?

It can vary, but they are mainly made of glass particles, synthetic resin and a setting ingredient. Here are some of the choices:

Composite fillings:

Composite fillings are strong, but they may not be as hard wearing as amalgam fillings.

Composite fillings are tooth coloured and are made from powdered glass, quartz, silica or other ceramic particles added to a resin base. The dentist will choose a shade to match your own teeth, although over time the filling can get stained. After the tooth is prepared, the filling is bonded onto the area with an adhesive and a light is shone on to it to set the filling. With this type of filling, the dentist will remove less of the tooth which is obviously a lot better.



Glass ionomer filling:

Glass ionomer fillings form a chemical bond with the tooth. They may also release fluoride, which helps prevent further tooth decay. This type of filling is fairly weak. Because of this, they are usually used on baby teeth and non-biting surfaces, such as around the neck of the tooth. Little preparation is needed as the filling bonds directly to the tooth.



Porcelain Inlays:

Your dentist can now use computer technology (called CAD/CAM) to design and prepare perfectly fitted porcelain inlays in just one or two visits. Porcelain inlays can also be made in a laboratory, but this will need at least two visits to your dentist. Porcelain can be hard wearing and long lasting, and it can be coloured to match your own teeth. This type of filling can be quite expensive.





Is it worth replacing my amalgam fillings with white ones?

It is usually best to change fillings when your dentist decides that an old filling needs replacing. When this happens you can ask to have it replaced with a tooth-coloured filling.

Some dentists prefer not to put white fillings in the back teeth. One way around this would be to have crowns or inlays, but this can mean removing more of the tooth and can be more expensive.



Amalgam Fillings

Are there any alternatives to fillings?

There are alternatives such as crowns and inlays although they can cost a lot more. Veneers can be used on front teeth instead of crowns or fillings.



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