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dental
care

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White fillings: What they are made of and how they are placed

White Fillings

In the past, teeth were most commonly repaired with amalgam (silver) fillings or gold restorations. Thanks to advances in modern dental materials and techniques, teeth can sometimes be restored with a more aesthetic and natural appearance. There are different types of cosmetic fillings currently available. The type used will depend on the location of the tooth and the amount of tooth structure that needs to be repaired.

Direct Composite

The most simple form of 'white filling' is technically called a **Composite**. It is made up of a composite quartz resin and usually contains some sort of light sensitive agent. These light cured composites are extremely cosmetic and most often bonded into place in one appointment. For this reason, they are often referred to as "bonding". These are primarily used in the front teeth and sometimes in your back teeth. These materials come in a variety of shades so that they will match the colour of your own teeth.

In order to bond a filling material to your tooth it is first necessary to remove decay, prepare the tooth and then to condition the enamel and dentine. Once conditioned, a thin resin is applied which bonds to the etched surface. The bond strength of these fillings is incredible. Today we can bond plastics and even amalgam (silver fillings) to your teeth. Bonding increases the strength of these restorations far beyond those of only a short time ago.

After placement, composites are hardened by **shining an intense light** on them for a specified period of time, usually around 40 seconds. Since we tend to look at this light all the time (many times a day) it is necessary for us to protect our eyes from it with an orange shield. You'll be given safety glasses to wear during your entire appointment, which will give your eyes a high level of protection. Your risks compared to the practitioners is very minimal but we do advise that you not look directly into the light.

Your teeth may experience some degree of temperature sensitivity for a few days to a week. If it does not disappear within that period of time, contact the dentist.