



Direct Fillings: Amalgam

What it is:

Dental amalgam is a stable alloy made by combining mercury, silver, tin, copper and sometimes other metallic elements. Amalgam fillings can be placed in one appointment.



Why you would get it:

Amalgam is most often used to fill a cavity that isn't visible to others, such as in the back molars. Amalgams are typically less expensive and easier to place than composite (tooth-colored) fillings. They are usually more durable to chewing pressure when a large filling is needed.

How it works:

Step 1

After numbing the area, your dentist will clean away the decayed enamel with a high-speed drill or laser system. For detail work, a slower drill or a manual scooping tool may also be used.



Decaying tooth

Step 2

Once the decay has been removed, your dentist will cut the hole into a shape that allows the filling to stay in your tooth while letting you chew properly. If your cavity is exceptionally large or deep, your dentist may coat the inside of the tooth with a lining that helps prevent tooth sensitivity and seals against leakage.



Decay removed

Step 3

The hole is filled with the amalgam. Before the amalgam hardens, your dentist will carve it to fit the curves and contours of your tooth.



Filling with amalgam material

Step 4

Your dentist will check your bite and adjust the filling, if needed, to make sure the new tooth surface is comfortable in your mouth.



If you have any questions about what your dental plan covers, talk with your dentist or visit [DeltaDentalAZ.com](https://www.DeltaDentalAZ.com) and sign in to view your benefits information.