

How To Be a Savvy Dental Patient

By *Jane Heimlich, Associated Editor*

Step up to your bathroom mirror and open wide. If your mouth is anything like mine, you're seeing a history of dentistry – silver amalgams, gold crowns, missing wisdom teeth, root canal treated teeth...

Despite teeth with a propensity to decay, I am mercifully free of disabling health problems. If I were not so lucky – if I were coping with arthritis, facial pain, cancer, an “unexplained” chronic condition, I would head for the nearest “preventive”, or “biological” dentist.

As I've learned from these enlightened dentists over the past few years, several common dental procedures – amalgam filling, root canals, cavitations – can be extremely harmful to you. These dentists are trained to remove toxic dental materials and reduce other stresses to the immune system. If you were their patient, they would pre-test all fillings to determine if the material is
□ “biocompatible” with you.

Preventive dentists reject the conventional view of dentistry that the mouth is divorced from the body, and treat the whole person, employing such time-tested approaches as nutrition, homeopathy, and relaxation techniques. Not surprisingly, many are under fire from the [American Dental Association](#) (ADA) and may keep a low profile. (See “[Dental Witch Hunt](#)”) The resources I've provided at the end of this supplement will help you find one.

If you're happy with your present dentist, you may want to share the information I've given you here with him (or her). This will put you in a better position to make informed decisions when you're sitting in the dentist's chair or taking care of your teeth and gums at home.

Not Every Filling Has a Silver Lining □ The hottest issue in dentistry today is “silver” amalgam fillings. They're cheap and easy to place, have been used for over 150 years and fill 100 million cavities every year. But these amalgams are a toxic time-bomb, according to preventive dentists, many of whom have practiced “mercury-free” dentistry for decades. The term “silver” amalgam is a misnomer – amalgams are approximately 50% mercury, a metal more toxic than lead, cadmium, or arsenic. The mercury in fillings is released as a vapor every time you chew, brush or grind your teeth, or drink hot liquids – and this toxic substance immediately enters your bloodstream.

The ADA, staunchly pro-amalgam since its formation in 1859, says that “There is no scientific evidence that exposure to mercury from amalgam restorations poses a serious health risk to humans, except for the exceedingly small number of allergic reactions.” Prior to 1989, the ADA maintained that mercury was “sealed in the amalgam,” but the mercury vaporizer put an end to that argument.

From Infant Death to Alzheimer's...If you read my article, “Are your fillings making you sick?” (*Health & Healing* Dec. 1993), you're aware that the ADA's defense of amalgams is at odds with scientific facts. Over 60 studies have shown, among other things, that mercury fillings caused gum disease, loss of kidney function, and increased resistance to antibiotics in animals... that the brains of Alzheimer's victims have high levels of mercury...and that the build-up of mercury in nerve cells is linked with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

More recent studies are revealing new links between amalgam fillings and illness: Babies who died prenatally or soon after birth (mostly from sudden infant death syndrome) showed a correlation between their mercury levels and their mother's mercury fillings. Mercury from amalgams lowers levels of serotonin, a potent brain chemical implicated with violent behavior, depression, alcoholism, and other disorders. Dentists with daily exposure to low concentrations of mercury vapor showed loss of manual dexterity and concentration when compared to controls.

Other Countries have Banned Mercury □ This solid research has led European countries (Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Austria) to issue deadlines to end the use of mercury in dental fillings. Almost all dentists in Sweden have stopped using mercury amalgams, said Dr. Michael Ziff, copublisher of *Bio-Probe Newsletter*. In Germany, more than half are mercury-free.

In 1995, Health Canada (a federal agency) assessed amalgam risks and recommended limiting the number of amalgams according to age. The tolerable daily intake of mercury vapor is four fillings for adults at any given time.

If you have a chronic condition that has not responded to treatment, how can you find out if your mercury fillings are hurting you? Some preventive dentists use a mercury vapor analyzer to measure the amount of mercury coming from your filled teeth. A more accurate test is the DMPS Challenge, in which a physician administers a chelating agent that causes mercury to be excreted. The amount of mercury in your urine indicates the amount in your body.

You Can Rid Your Mouth of Mercury

Tooth-colored composite fillings are a safe alternative to amalgams. They're more expensive than mercury-silver amalgams and take longer to place, but they are free of mercury.

Two metal-free composites of choice for many preventative dentists are: Holistore ([Den-Mat](#), (800) 433-6628 ext. 6205 and unshaded Dicor ([Dentsply](#), (800) 532-2855.

There are a few filling materials that you should consider. Holistore by Den-Mat is a composite that contains no Aluminum oxide, iron oxide or fluoride. The wear factor is not the best. Point 4 by Kerr is a good hard filling material however it contains barium. I use electrodermal screening to pick the best filling material for your system. I believe it is a better way than the blood test because it deals with energy of the material and your energy. The BelleGlass is used unshaded and bonded in with Panivia 21 that contains no fluoride. It is a hard material and seems to do the job. Hope this is helpful. □ (from a forum)

Mercury is one of the most toxic dental metals, but *all* filling metals can be harmful, depending on the individual. Fifty percent of American women are allergic to nickel (commonly used in crowns and bridges), and in some people, a combination of metals acts like a “mouth battery” creating electric currents that can cause a variety of problems. That's why preventive dentists pre-test all materials, including composites, with methods like the following: □ **Clifford Material Reactivity Testing.** This blood test gives you a listing of dental products that are suitable for you, and those that are not. You or your dentist can call (719) 550-0008 for details. □ **Electro-dermal screening** enables a skilled clinician to pinpoint dental materials that stress your autonomic nervous system. To locate a dentist trained in this procedure, contact [BIOSOURCE](#), Inc., Orem, UT, (801) 226-1117. □ **Applied kinesiology**, a form of muscle testing, is used to verify test results.

If you decide to replace your amalgams with another type of filling, it is imperative that you consult a dentist trained in the proper protocol for this. There are very precise guidelines to follow in terms of correct sequence of removal, protective equipment for both patient and dental personnel, air filtering system, and detox measures.

Can Your Root Canal Make you Sick? □ Perhaps more startling than the dangers of mercury fillings is what George E. Meinig, D.D.S, author of [Root Canal Cover-up Exposed!](#) (Bion Publishing, 1994) says about root canals. “Root

canals endanger lives,” says Dr. Meinig, a founding member of the [American Association of Endodontists](#) (root canal specialists).

To understand Dr. Meinig's serious charge against a procedure that 20 million Americans undergo each year, you need to be acquainted with the focal infection theory. This theory says that a chronic infection commonly found in teeth can leak bacteria or their toxins into the body causing arthritis, heart or kidney disease, or other health problems. The focal infection theory was popular in the early 1900s, when countless people had their teeth extracted in the hope of curing their arthritis or other disease.

Dr. Meinig and others base their conclusions on root canals on the work of Dr. Weston A. Price, who spent 25 years documenting that root canal treated teeth, no matter how healthy they look, are a prime source of focal infection. Dr. Price's meticulous research showing the link between dental infections and degenerative disease was buried by his critics for 70 years, but recently surfaced.

The American Association of Endodontists has long called the focal infection theory □“erroneous...thoroughly disproved.” But today, with technology that enables dentists to more accurately determine sources of infection, it is regaining favor with preventive dentists and doctors. Dr. Thomas Rau, director of a medical clinic in Switzerland, estimates that 90% of all infections that he observed in his patients are caused by bacteria from dental infections.

What Exactly Is a Root Canal? □A root canal is performed to save a tooth when the pulp tissue containing nerve and blood vessels is damaged beyond repair. Ostensibly, when a dentist cleans out the pulp chamber, he removes all the bacteria. But as Dr. Price discovered, this is not the case. Your tooth structure (dentin) is made up of thousands of microscopic tubules – if arranged end to end, three miles of tiny tubes! Antibacterial drugs cannot penetrate these tubules, so when the dentist seals the tooth, bacteria remain in the tubules and, in time, emit toxins into the bloodstream.

First acting on his suspicion that one of his patient's crippling arthritis was caused by a root canal that he had placed himself, Dr. Price extracted her tooth and embedded it under the skin of a rabbit. In two days, the rabbit developed the same crippling arthritis as his patient, while the patient herself was soon walking without pain.

Over the next 25 years, Dr. Price implanted root canal teeth under the skin of thousands of rabbits. Whatever the patient's condition – heart disease by far the most common – the rabbit developed the same disease. But when he implanted

healthy teeth or sterile coins under rabbits' skins, these materials produced no ill effects.

What if you've already had a root canal? Dr. Price did not routinely advise his patients to have their root-filled teeth extracted. As Dr. Meinig said, “He believed that if you're healthy then your immune system is capable of controlling the bacteria involved in root filled teeth.”

“But if you're battling degenerative disease or have a family history of chronic disease, then Dr. Price favored removing root filled teeth.” If you're considering such a move, or if your dentist recommends a root canal, give him a copy of Dr. Meinig's book and discuss the pros and cons with him. Be sure he sees your medical records so he fully understands your history and genetic background.

Cavitations – Put An End to Pain Beyond root canals, the focal infection theory is also linked to cavitations, which are literally holes within your jawbone. J.E. Bouquot, D.D.S., an oral pathologist at the West Virginia University, and others refer to this condition as NICO (Neuralgia-Inducing Cavitational Osteonecrosis).

Years ago, I visited Madge, a woman then in her early 60s who was confined to her home with unrelenting facial pain, or trigeminal neuralgia. Doctors offered her no help other than painkillers. If I had only known then what I discovered researching this article – that chronic facial pain is frequently caused by a jawbone infection, or cavitation.

For Many, An Instant Cure Cavitations most often occur where teeth have been extracted and the dental surgeon has failed to remove any diseased tissue and infected bone left in the socket. This impairs circulation, and proper healing does not occur.

As Dr. Christopher J. Hussar, a specialist in cavitation surgery explains, cavitations can rarely be seen on x-ray. To diagnose them, he injects the mouth area with a local anesthetic (a procedure called neural therapy). Dr. Hussar then surgically cleans out the lesion and takes a biopsy of the infected bone to confirm his diagnosis. In many cases, his patients are almost instantly free of pain.

But chronic pain caused by cavitations is not limited to facial pain, says Dr. Hussar. Another patient of his had suffered for years from eye pain and double vision, with no help from conventional doctors. After locating four cavitations, Dr. Hussar treated them surgically, and two months later, she called him with the

welcome news that she was pain-free and could read for the first time in years.

Dr. Hussar goes on to describe an 85-year-old woman whose pain in her knees was so intense she couldn't wear stockings. After treatment for NICO, "she was dancing around the room!" Other success stories include patients with chronic headaches, heart murmur, multiple sclerosis, food sensitivities, and balance problems.

Fluoride: A Hidden Health Foe It may come as a shock to learn that fluoride is not a "good guy." As long as we can remember, fluoride has been added to our drinking water and toothpaste, hailed as a preventive of tooth decay.

But the truth is that fluoride is a poison, a powerfully toxic chemical. Scientific studies reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and elsewhere show that hip fracture rates are significantly higher in both women and men who reside in fluoridated communities... that cancers increase by 5% when fluoride is added to the community drinking water... that fluoridation causes a dramatic increase in bone cancer in young men... and that there's virtually no difference in decay rates between children who drink fluoridated water and those who don't. Most of Europe banned or discontinued fluoridation years ago, and its tooth decay rate is similar to ours.

Today, 60% of the water supply in the U.S. is fluoridated, even though not well-done study exists that shows a benefit from this, says Dr. David Kennedy, author of *How to Save Your Teeth* (Health Action Press, 1993). In spite of all this, the ADA still maintains that fluoride is absolutely safe and "vital for strong decay-resistant teeth."

The best way to avoid fluoride poisoning is by drinking distilled water, or through home delivery.

Dental Witch Hunt □ Last December, Dr. Hal Huggins, who voiced concerns about mercury fillings as early as 1974, was charged by the Colorado State Board of Dental Examiners with publishing "misleading, deceptive and false" information (among other charges). Since then, the Board has taken no action. Dr. Huggins' book, *It's All In Your Head* (Avery Publishing, 1993), minces no words about the dangers of mercury amalgams.

"The Attorney General has been after me for 22 years," Dr. Huggins said, an action which he estimates cost taxpayers three million dollars and left him

broke "and emotionally broken."

Dr. Huggins' ordeal is no isolated incident. To date, attorney generals in seven states have issued complaints against 20 mercury-free dentists. In June 1987, the ADA's Council on Ethics stated that dentists who remove amalgams for the purpose of removing toxic substances from the body are committing fraud or quackery.

Preventive dentists are charged with not conforming to "standard of care," meaning how other dentists in the community practice, even though this "standard" includes placing toxic materials in their patients' mouths.

What's worse, the ADA takes no responsibility for endorsing mercury amalgams, stating in court that it owes nothing to patients who were injured by exposure to mercury from fillings.

It's hoped that two forthcoming human studies on mercury amalgams (one supervised by Dr. Huggins), will force the ADA to reverse its outmoded stance on amalgams.

But until that time, preventive dentists everywhere are at risk. Contact your state congressmen and urge them to pass laws to protect mercury-free dentists.