

Michael A. Atencio, D.D.S.

3773 Baker Lane, Ste 3 Reno, NV 89509 775-829-8684 775-829-8685 Fax

Silver Fillings vs. Tooth Colored Fillings

In the past, our available dental materials limited us in how we could fix a decayed or broken tooth. Gold has always been the standard to which all other filling materials have been compared. The cost of gold as well as its lack of esthetic qualities has limited its use. Silver fillings have been the primary choice due to ease of use and their relative cost effectiveness. *Silver fillings do have a down side, however.* They are held in place by mechanical undercuts that are purposely made in the tooth to hold the filling in place, causing us to have to remove more of the tooth structure than necessary. The undercuts are wedged shaped and weaken the tooth somewhat. The wedging effect is somewhat equivalent to a wedge used to split logs. Guess what? The same wedging effect can occur in the tooth: the silver filling being the wedge and tooth being the log. You may bite into something hard and without warning, the tooth splits or cracks. Now you need a crown, a root canal or both.

The *good news* is that the tooth colored fillings make the tooth stronger, much less likely to crack or fracture and get rid of all those “black” silver filling in your mouth.

The *bad news* is that insurance companies hate these tooth colored fillings. Why? Because they cost more! Why do they cost more? The tooth colored filling material is two to four times the cost of silver filling material and it takes longer to place the filling when done correctly. Forget all the advantages that this treatment provides. Forget that it leads to a *healthier tooth*, as well as *a great looking mouth*. Most insurance companies won't cover the tooth colored fillings and will only pay what they would have for a cheaper silver filling. Unfortunately, that means there may be a larger balance due from you. We are hopeful that insurance companies will one day come out of the “dark ages” and into the 21st century, but don't count on that happening soon.

We hope that this explains our position regarding silver fillings. We are very excited that we can provide you with healthier restorations for your teeth that are nearly invisible. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please don't hesitate to ask! Remember it is your mouth.