

# The Mercury Amalgam Controversy

For many years now, there has been much discussion of the mercury amalgam controversy. It is a known fact that mercury is one of the most toxic heavy metals there is, and maintains a liquid state at room temperature. It is mixed with other granulated metals and alloys as a binder in amalgam fillings, and continually gives off harmful vapors after it is placed in a tooth as a filling. These vapors are easily inhaled through the mouth and nose. In addition, mercury toxins combine with saliva, which is then swallowed and ingested into the body.

Mercury exposure from amalgam fillings may contribute to, among other things, heart disease, hearing loss, neurological problems, digestive problems, fatigue, depression, birth defects, and quite possibly most degenerative chronic diseases such as Alzheimer's, M.S., and Parkinson's. For this reason, the State of California passed Proposition 65, wherein dental patients are now required to be informed about the health hazards of mercury amalgam. Other states are now following suit with similar laws.

The mercury amalgam controversy is being perpetuated by the American Dental Association and its dentist members, which continues to deny that there is anything wrong with mercury amalgam. However, the ADA has a lot at stake, since they support the major amalgam manufacturers and the dentists who place the amalgams. Statistics continue to mount showing that mercury may indeed be a hazardous substance to have in the mouth, regardless of what ADA-funded studies may show.

The Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has pretty much skirted the mercury amalgam controversy by saying it's the individual dentist, not the amalgam manufacturers, who is responsible for how much mercury is in this type of filling, since it is the dentist that actually mixes the amalgam immediately prior to putting it into a tooth as a filling. At the same time, state and federal agencies strictly regulate and enforce the handling of mercury as a hazardous material. Dentists cannot leave unused mixed dental amalgam exposed in the office, yet no one can explain how this harmful substance suddenly and mysteriously becomes safe when it is placed in the mouth as a tooth filling.