

## Fill me up

No one really ever talks about fillings. By this I mean, typically you go to the dentist and they tell you need a filling. You make an appointment and get the filling done. Most patients don't even bother to ask what type of filling unless they ask if it's white or silver.



The truth is there are a significant number of filling materials and they all have their uses. I thought I'd take you through the choices available so that next time you need a filling you can easily make the correct choice for you.

Let's start with the tried and true silver filling. This is the basic filling that is still among the most popular for back teeth. It is probably the most cost effective option available in that it often costs less than the white fillings and outlasts the average white filling by two to three times. Personally when I want a good basic filling on a back tooth this is still my choice.

White fillings. There are actually three typical kinds of white fillings. The oldest are the composites that are placed and shaped in the mouth. These are used almost exclusively for front tooth cavities. They can be used in the back teeth, but, as noted earlier, they last half to one third as long as the silver ones do.

In addition to the white filling placed and shaped in the mouth there are also what are known as indirect composites and porcelain fillings. These are made either by computerized equipment in the office or by an outside lab. Because of this the costs for both of these are well above both the silver and direct composite fillings. The benefit is that they last longer or wear better than other white fillings.

Finally there is gold. Yes I know, no one does gold anymore. It is still an option and can be the best option in areas where cosmetics isn't a high priority. In my experience, they can outlast all the other types of fillings. In fact I have seen some that we're forty years old that looked as if they were placed yesterday. This is also a pricey proposition as the cost of gold has skyrocketed and they are made by an outside lab.

There are a few other filling materials which are used under more septic or unusual situations. But for the most part these are the options available to you.

If you want to know what the best options for you are, call us for a free consultation at (708) 849-4400.