

At Temple Street we offer NHS care to all of our patients and follow NHS guidelines and protocols closely. Any necessary treatment will be offered on the NHS using the most suitable materials in the particular clinical circumstance.

In many cases we will recommend silver amalgam fillings for larger cavities at the back of the mouth. If you are concerned about the appearance of metal fillings and are interested in learning about more aesthetic options for restoring your teeth, we may be able to offer alternative treatments privately. Composite (tooth-coloured) fillings are widely used and can be extremely effective in some situations. If composite is clinically the best material for a particular situation this will be offered initially as a NHS treatment.

Please read the following so that you are able to make an informed decision about which type of filling you would prefer. The main types are amalgam or composite, but there are also options of gold, porcelain or composite inlays, onlays and crowns.

Amalgam fillings

Amalgam is a mixture of silver, mercury, copper and some other trace metals. It is extremely strong and is usually very long-lasting. Disadvantages of amalgam include that it is not attractive and that the tooth surrounding the filling sometimes becomes brittle and breaks off in certain situations. Many people are concerned about the effects of mercury on their health and wish to avoid the use of amalgam fillings. At this practice, we do not feel that there is a convincing case that amalgam should not be used, but would advise you to research the issue for yourself if you are concerned. At Temple Street we are guided by current scientific, peer-reviewed, evidence and the advice of the Department of Health.

Summary: Amalgam fillings are usually most suitable for very deep cavities towards the back of the mouth where appearance is less important.



Amalgam fillings



Composite fillings

Composite fillings

Sometimes called "white" or "tooth-coloured" fillings. Composite is a plastic material with embedded glass-like particles. The advantages of composite include that it has a very natural appearance and that it is able to bond to the surrounding tooth to reduce the chance of tooth breakage in some situations. Composites do not contain metals and sometimes require less tooth drilling. The disadvantages of composite include that it may be more costly and that it is not always suitable for very deep cavities at the back of the mouth. Sometimes composite fillings may not be as long-lasting as amalgam. The cost of a composite filling is dependent upon the size and shape of the cavity in the tooth; your dentist will be able to give a quote as to the cost for each of your teeth.

Summary: Composite fillings are often suitable for shallow cavities or brittle teeth. They are an attractive option if appearance is important to you or when you wish to avoid having metal in your mouth.

Please discuss your preference with your dentist who will be happy to advise.