

PATIENT INFORMATION · RESTORATIVE DENTISTRY

Fillings

A filling repairs a tooth damaged by decay or a small fracture.

What is it?

A filling repairs a tooth damaged by decay or a small fracture. The decay is removed, the tooth is cleaned, and the space is filled to restore its shape and help stop the decay spreading.

- **Composite:** tooth-coloured resin bonded to the tooth; often used for small to medium cavities
- **Glass ionomer:** releases fluoride; often used for children's teeth and near the gum line, but less hard-wearing
- **Ceramic:** made to fit and bonded in place; resists staining

Who it may help

- ✓ A cavity (hole) found at a check-up or on an X-ray
- ✓ A small chip or crack
- ✓ An old filling that is worn, cracked or leaking

Suitability depends on your individual situation and is confirmed after an examination.

How it works



1 Decay has made a cavity in the chewing surface of the tooth.



2 The tooth is numbed, and the decay is removed.



3 Tooth-coloured filling material is placed in layers and hardened with a blue light.



4 The filling is shaped and polished to fit your bite.

Simplified illustration, not to scale. Your own treatment may differ.

What to expect

- 1 Numbing.** The area is numbed with local anaesthetic.
- 2 Removing the decay.** The decay is removed with a drill, an air abrasion instrument or, for some small to moderate cavities, the Fotona LightWalker laser.
- 3 Cleaning.** The area is cleaned to remove bacteria and debris.
- 4 Filling and polishing.** The filling material is placed, shaped to your bite and polished.

Many fillings are done in one visit of about 30 to 60 minutes.

Things to consider

- **Sensitivity:** to temperature or pressure is common for a few days to weeks
- **Wear over time:** fillings can wear, chip or need replacing
- **Larger damage:** large cavities may need an inlay, onlay or crown instead

Any surgical or invasive procedure carries risks. Before proceeding, you should seek a second opinion from an appropriately qualified health practitioner.

Aftercare

- ✓ **While numb:** take care not to bite your cheek, lip or tongue, and avoid hot drinks and chewy food until the numbness wears off
- ✓ **Sensitivity:** this usually eases over a week or two; a toothpaste for sensitive teeth may help
- ✓ **Hard foods:** for the first few days, avoid biting hard foods such as ice or hard lollies on the filled tooth
- ✓ **Grinding:** if you grind or clench, ask whether a night guard would help protect your fillings

General guidance only. Always follow the specific instructions your dentist gives you.

Costs & health funds

Fees depend on your treatment and are confirmed after an examination, with a written estimate before planned treatment starts. Your health fund rebate depends on your fund, level of extras cover, annual limits and waiting periods. We can claim on the spot with Tyro, so on the day you pay any gap. All health funds are welcome.

Call (08) 9330 7115 if you have heavy bleeding, pain or swelling that gets worse, fever, or anything that worries you. For trouble breathing or swallowing, call 000.

Questions to ask your dentist

- ? Which filling material do you recommend for this tooth, and why?
- ? Could the laser be used for my filling?
- ? How long might the filling last?
- ? Is the cavity large enough to need an inlay, onlay or crown instead?
- ? What will it cost, and what might my health fund cover?

Before your appointment

- ✓ Have a normal meal beforehand: you may be numb for a few hours afterwards
- ✓ Tell us about any changes to your health or medicines since your last visit
- ✓ Your Medicare card and health fund card, for on-the-spot claiming with Tyro
- ✓ A DVA or concession card, if you have one

General guidance only. Always follow your dentist's specific instructions.

Myaree Dental & Professional Centre

84 North Lake Road, Myaree WA 6154 · Phone (08) 9330 7115
customer@myareedental.com · www.myareedental.com
Advanced Dental Healthcare Pty Ltd (ADHPL) · ABN 48 158 833 713

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