



Dental Procedure Information

Filling

Introduction

Dental caries, also known as tooth decay or a cavity, is a disease where bacteria change carbohydrates such as sugar in food left on teeth to acid that demineralises hard tooth structure (enamel, dentine and cementum). If demineralization exceeds saliva and other remineralisation like from calcium, these tissues progressively break down, producing dental caries (cavities, holes in the teeth). Once a cavity is formed, the only method to repair the tooth is filling the cavity. Filling a cavity prevents further decay and reshaping a filled tooth will ensure that chewing remains unaffected. The material used as the filling is dependent upon the location and severity of the cavity. The two most commonly used fillings are dental amalgam and composite resin.



Outcomes

The purpose of this procedure is to restore the anatomy and function of the tooth. It can help to preserve the tooth, prevent complications and improve appearance.

Procedures

1. Amalgam:
 - Local anaesthesia.
 - The doctor will remove any decay before filling the cavity with amalgam.
 - The filling is then polished.
2. Composite Resin:
 - Local anaesthesia.
 - The doctor will remove any decay or weakened enamel.
 - The tooth is then etched (i.e. with 30% phosphoric acid), rinsed thoroughly and dried.
 - A thin layer of adhesive is applied to the etched tooth.
 - Composite resin is used to fill the cavity.
 - An ultraviolet light is used to strengthen the bond between resin and tooth enamel.
 - The filling is then shaped and polished.

Pre-procedure Preparations

The doctor will explain the reason, the procedure and the possible complications to you.

Points to note after filling

1. Patients who have amalgam fillings should avoid chewing with the repaired tooth within 24 hours.
2. Coffee, tea or smoking would stain the composite fillings, if discoloration becomes severe, change the filling if necessary.
3. The repaired tooth may be sensitive at first, avoid drinks that may be too hot or too cold. If the condition worsens, please schedule a visit with your dentist.
4. Pulpitis may occur in patients with severe tooth decay. If acute swelling and severe pain occur, schedule a visit with your dentist, as further treatment may be necessary.

Should there be any enquiries or concerns, please consult the dentist.

Under the professional care of the dentist, you will gradually recover. We wish you all the best during your treatment and recovery.

If you have any questions after reading the entire leaflet, please write them down in the spaces provided in order for the dentist to further follow-up.

Compiled by Union Hospital Operating Theatre (OT) Governance Committee

The above information is for reference only, please enquire your physician for details
Our Hospital reserves the RIGHT to amend any information in this leaflet without prior notification