



► *This Newsletter:*

Biocompatibility Should Be a Top Priority in Dental Care

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The Mercury-Amalgam Controversy: From the 1800s to Today



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Fluoride: The Ethics of Forced Medication

Dental *focus*

Holistic dentistry for total health

Debates about the toxicity of mercury-amalgam fillings have been raging since the time they were introduced to Americans in the late 1820s.

The Amalgam Controversy: From the 1800s to Today

Amalgam was first developed in 1819 by a British chemist who filed down silver coins and mixed them with some liquid mercury to make a paste. (Today's amalgam also contains copper, tin, and zinc.) The paste would harden after being placed into a cavity, as a result of a chemical reaction.

Amalgam was a real innovation for the dental profession, since the only other options were expensive gold fillings, dangerous lead, and tooth extraction. But even then, some dentists rebelled against amalgam due to mercury's toxic nature.

When mercury-amalgam was introduced to America in the late 1820s, dentists began to debate its use right away. Early dental associations advocated the elimination of amalgam fillings, because mercury was a known poison. But since amalgam was so much cheaper and more popular, dentists decided to place it anyway. The profits were too great to resist.

The controversy over the use of dental amalgam led to the demise of the first national dental organization in the United States, the American Society of Dental Surgeons. (The Society, which

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Newsletter created by Natalie N. Gotschalk

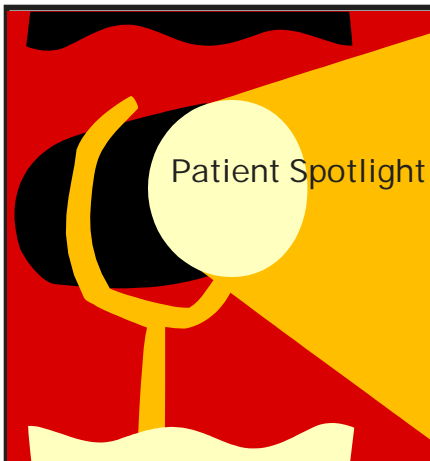
FSA's Will Be Limited to \$2,500 Annually

Many of our patients pay for part of their dental treatments with flexible spending accounts (FSAs). FSAs are used to save pre-tax income which is then used to reimburse a range of medical expenses, including dental costs.

Beginning January 1, 2013, the new health care reform bill will limit annual contributions to health care FSAs to \$2,500 per year. (Currently, employers are can set their own contribution limits.) So take advantage of these next three years to clean your mouth by completing your treatment plan! Contact us at (847) 426-9000 so that we can schedule your next visit.

Dr. Lina Garcia, DDS, DMD
33 West Higgins Road
Suite 600
South Barrington, IL 60010

Phone: 847-426-9000
Fax: 847-426-9050
Email: drlinagarcia@yahoo.com
Website: <http://drlinagarcia.com>



Jelka

Baker Extraordinaire

Jelka is a new patient of ours who aspires to own a bakery someday. She creates delicious custom-baked goods that can be tailored to any food preference or sensitivity. For example, Jelka can use natural sweeteners like dried fruit instead of sugar, gluten-free flours such as hemp and rice,

and carob instead of cocoa. So if you want a good, healthy, treat, look no further! Jelka makes breads, muffins, cupcakes, and cookies out of the ingredients you want her to use. Dr. Garcia and the staff have tasted many of her recipes, like raspberry cupcakes, chocolate cupcakes, buckwheat bread, and flatbread with rosemary and red peppers. These goodies are usually devoured before we can take any home — you're going to love them!

Jelka is currently baking out of her home, and we would love to be able to give her orders on a regular basis. *Call Jelka at (708) 977-9080 to find out more or to order some tasty treats!*

From Our Kitchen to Yours...

Gwen Kic, our New Patient Coordinator, would like to share a recipe that is a staple in her home: homemade mayonnaise. It's perfect as a sauce for fish, and you can add flavorings such as fresh basil or dill to it. Gwen especially likes it in her salmon salad.

Homemade Mayonnaise

2 raw, organic eggs

Juice of 1/2 to 1 organic lemon (or lime)

1 tsp. kosher salt

1/2 to 1 c. olive oil, according to desired consistency (the more oil, the thicker the mayonnaise)

Blend eggs in food processor. Add lemon juice and salt and blend. While running the food processor, slowly add olive oil until mayonnaise reaches desired consistency. Makes about 2 cups.

Amalgam: ADA Condemns Dentists for Removing Toxic Fillings

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only lasted from 1840 to 1856, required its members to sign a pledge that they would not use amalgam fillings.)

In 1859, a new organization was established to promote the toxic material: the American Dental Association (ADA). The ADA officially claimed, as it does now, that mercury-amalgam is safe for patients.

For a time, the debate was reasonably quiet as a new generation of dentists was taught that mercury-amalgam was the best material for cavity fillings.

In the 1920s, another major controversy erupted. A German scientist, Dr. Alfred Stock, published over 30 articles attacking mercury fillings for their toxic effects. His 20 years of research – driven by his suspicion that his own health problems were related to his amalgam fillings – suggested that mercury leached out of fillings and promoted disease. However, the dental community severely criticized his work and did not take it seriously.

The ADA has steadfastly endorsed the safety and effectiveness of mercury-amalgam fill-

How Does the U.S. Compare?

Governments of other countries (e.g. Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden, and Norway) have placed restrictions on, and/or issued advisories against, the use of mercury in dental fillings, particularly in children and pregnant women.

ings. Its official stance is that amalgam is a "safe, affordable and durable material," and that the mixture of metals in an amalgam filling creates a "stable" substance.

Moreover, the ADA's code of ethics states that removing serviceable mercury fillings simply for the purpose of "eliminating toxic materials from the body" is unethical.

It is curious that the ADA should condemn this as an unethical practice, when the rest of the world is limiting the use of mercury-amalgam. Many countries' governments have – at the very least – advised against the use of mercury in dental fillings, particularly in children and pregnant women. (Other countries have completely restricted

the use of mercury-amalgam fillings.)

In July 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the first time classified dental amalgam. In its final rule, the FDA acknowledged that dental amalgam releases mercury vapor, that mercury vapor is absorbed by the lungs and circulatory system, that the mercury accumulates in bodily organs, and that the mercury can cross both the blood-brain barrier and the placenta to reach the fetal brain. It also agreed that mercury is a "toxic metal" that is "well-documented to cause neurological and renal adverse health effects."

Yet the FDA did NOTHING to restrict the use of dental amalgam!

The FDA determined that the levels of mercury vapors released by dental amalgam are too low to cause harm (emphasizing that only high exposure levels are dangerous), and that the causal link between dental amalgam and adverse health effects is tenuous. The FDA ultimately classified dental amalgam into Class II (medium risk), placing it in the same class as gold and composite fillings. ■

The best compliment our patients can give us is a referral of their friends and family. ~ Dr. Garcia & Staff