



## **HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA DENTAL MATERIALS FACT SHEET**

The Dental Materials Fact Sheet (DMFS) is required by law (Chapter 801, 1992 Statutes). This law requires:

“...the Board of Dental Examiners of California to develop, distribute, and update as necessary, a fact sheet describing and comparing the risks and efficacy of the various types of dental restorative materials that may be used to repair a dental patient’s oral condition or defect...”

This law required that the fact sheet be provided to all licensed dentists to assist them in discussing the various restorative materials with their patients.

A fact sheet was published by the Dental Board in 1993 and sent to all licensed dentists.

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In 1999, the Joint Legislative Sunset Review Committee reviewed the Dental Board’s activities and performance and informed the board that the fact sheet should be updated to reflect the current science of restorative materials.

The Dental Board published an updated fact sheet in November 2001, following an 18-month period of public hearings.

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Legislation passed in 2001 (Chapter 532), that amended the original law to require that the DMFS: “...shall be provided by a dentist to every new patient and to patients of record prior to the performance of dental restoration work.”

Receipt of the DMFS must be acknowledged in writing by the patient, and should be kept in the patient’s record. Whenever the fact sheet is updated, it must be distributed in the manner described above.

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Once this requirement became law, the Dental Board began production of a “consumer-friendly” version of the DMFS, simplifying the language to meet the recommended reading level standard (eighth grade reading level) used by the Department of Consumer Affairs for information distributed to the public.

In 2002, the Dental Board established a subcommittee to develop a consumer-friendly fact sheet. It was approved by the Dental Board and is available on-line at [www.dbc.ca.gov](http://www.dbc.ca.gov). Dentists should always use the most current version available.

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At the national level, the science surrounding dental amalgam continues to be assessed. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration established the “Working Group on Dental Amalgam” in the early 1990s and has in both 1993 and 1997 reported that they have reviewed the contemporary research literature on dental amalgam and found no reason to ban dental amalgam or to restrict its use in any subpopulation. In 2003, the FDA, along with the National Institutes of Health and

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the National Institutes of Dental and Craniofacial Research, sponsored and convened another panel of experts to review the scientific literature published since 1997 to again assess the safety and use of dental amalgam.

“FDA has reviewed the best available scientific evidence to determine whether the low levels of mercury vapor associated with dental amalgam fillings are a cause for concern. Based on this evidence, FDA considers dental amalgam fillings safe for adults and children ages 6 and above. The amount of mercury measured in the bodies of people with dental amalgam fillings is well below levels associated with adverse health effects. Even in adults and children ages 6 and above who have fifteen or more amalgam surfaces, mercury exposure due to dental amalgam fillings has been found to be far below the lowest levels associated with harm. Clinical studies in adults and children ages 6 and above have also found no link between dental amalgam fillings and health problems.

There is limited clinical information about the potential effects of dental amalgam fillings on pregnant women and their developing fetuses, and on children under the age of 6, including breastfed infants. However, the estimated amount of mercury in breast milk attributable to dental amalgam is low and falls well below general levels for oral intake that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers safe. FDA concludes that the existing data support a finding that infants are not at risk for adverse health effects from the breast milk of women exposed to mercury vapor from dental amalgam. The estimated daily dose of mercury vapor in children under age 6 with dental amalgams is also expected to be at or below levels that the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) consider safe. Pregnant or nursing mothers and parents with young children should talk with their dentists if they have concerns about dental amalgam.”

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