Dental Materials Fact Sheet FAQ

What is the Dental Materials Fact Sheet (DMFS)?
A state law passed in 1992 required the Dental Board of California to develop and distribute 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. The fact sheet was originally intended for use by dentists to encourage them to discuss the risks and benefits of the various restorative materials with their patients. (Refer to Business & Professions Code section 1648.10.) The Dental Board is obligated to update the fact sheet when they deem necessary.

The first DMFS was developed and distributed by the Dental Board in 1993 and was subsequently revised to reflect current science in 2001. However, when new legislation passed in 2001 required the fact sheet be given to patients requiring restorative work, the Dental Board determined that a more “user-friendly” fact sheet was needed. That fact sheet was approved by the Dental Board in May 2004.

How do I obtain a copy of the current DMFS?
You can obtain a copy at the Dental Board web site at www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/index.shtml#pubs or by contacting them at 916.263.2300.

I think the 2004 fact sheet is missing information on newer materials. May I use a substitute fact sheet?
You may not replace the 2004 fact sheet with another, but you may provide supplemental information.

Which patients need to receive the DMFS?
The law requires that dentists provide a copy of the DMFS to new patients and patients of record prior to commencing any dental restorative work or upon request of the patient. However, the dentist need only provide the fact sheet to the patient once, until such time that the fact sheet is updated. The dentist is required to obtain a signed acknowledgement that the patient has received the fact sheet, and a copy of the acknowledgement must be placed in the patient’s record. Whenever the Dental Board updates the fact sheet, patients must receive it as described above.

Is there a specific form I need to use for the acknowledgment or can I prepare my own?
The legislation did not prescribe a specific format and the Dental Board has not created a form. CDA recommends you create a form that includes a statement such as:

“I, (a blank line to insert the patient’s name) acknowledge I have received from (name of dentist or dental office) a copy of the Dental Materials Fact Sheet dated May 2004, as required by law.”

The form should include blank lines for the patient’s signature and the date. You may also want to place a copy of the top half of the first page of the fact sheet somewhere on your form to provide a visual reference for the patient.

I don’t place amalgams — am I exempt?
No. The law specifically states it should be provided “prior to the performance of dental restoration work.” This includes fillings — whether amalgam or composite — crowns and bridges, inlays and onlays and veneers.

© 2016 California Dental Association
The law also states that this requirement “shall not apply to any surgical, endodontic, periodontic or orthodontic dental procedure in which dental restorative materials are not used.”

Who is responsible for making copies of the fact sheet?  
Dentists are responsible for copying the fact sheet for their patients. Although the law does not specify size and typeface, please ensure that it is completely legible. Instructions for distribution, printing and folding the DMFS are available at the Dental Board website, www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/index.shtml#pubs.

Is the DMFS available in other languages?  

Obtaining the patient acknowledgement and dealing with patient questions will take time.  
Yes, it will take time. However, the DMFS has existed since 1993 with the understanding that dentists would take the opportunity to review dental material options with their patients. Obtaining the acknowledgment became a requirement in 2001. Reviewing this information with your patients should be viewed as an opportunity to educate.

Is the required acknowledgement the same as informed consent?  
No, it is not. Informed consent is a legal doctrine that requires a health care provider to obtain a voluntary consent from a patient to proceed with dental treatment after the patient has been informed of the risks, benefits and alternatives to the dental treatment. The fact sheet is an educational tool that can be used during the informed consent process. It is not a document to secure permission to proceed with treatment.

What if I disagree with the DMFS, do I have any options?  
No, there is no alternative to this requirement.

How do I find out if the DMFS has been updated?  
The Dental Board and CDA will inform you when it is updated and where to obtain an updated copy.

Must the DMFS be presented to minor children? Does each minor patient need an acknowledgement form?  
The DMFS is presented to the parent of a minor child and the parent handles the acknowledgment of receipt. CDA recommends that you list all the children in a family on one acknowledgment form and request a parent or guardian sign the form on behalf of the children. The signed form can then be photocopied and placed in each child’s patient record.