

	General Description	Principal Uses	Cost	Durability	Appearance	Patient Tolerance
Porcelain and similar materials	Porcelain, ceramics and glass-like materials	Crowns (caps) and Veneers	High Requires at least 2 visits and laboratory services	Varies May fracture under heavy biting loads.	Excellent Looks like the tooth.	Well tolerated
Metals	Alloys of Gold or other metals	Crowns, Bridges, and Partial Dentures	High Requires at least 2 visits and laboratory services.	Excellent Very strong and durable	Poor Looks like the metal used.	Gold and alloys are well tolerated Very low sensitivity. Other metals sometimes cause allergies.
Porcelain fused to metal	Porcelain fused to an underlying metal to add strength	Crowns (caps) and Bridges	High Requires at least 2 visits and laboratory services	Excellent Very strong and durable	Very Good Does not quite have the translucency of natural teeth.	Gold alloys well tolerated Very low sensitivity. Other metals sometimes cause allergies.
Amalgam (Silver fillings)	Mixture of mercury and silver alloy powder forming a solid filling	Fillings Where not easily seen and the bite is heavy	Low Requires 1 visit. Usually long lasting.	Good to Excellent	Poor Has a silver or blackened silver color.	Well tolerated. Low sensitivity after placement. Allergies are rare.
Composite	Mixture of glass filler and acrylic	Fillings Where easily seen	Moderate to High Requires 1 visit. Longevity is subject to many variables	Fair If filling is small or average in size.	Good to Excellent Looks like the tooth, but tends to stain.	Usually well tolerated. Sensitivity highly dependant on adequate bonding to tooth. Allergies are rare.

Please see the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) February 2002 "Consumer Update on Dental Amalgam", available on the FDA website.
<http://www.fda.gov/chrd/consumer/amalgams.html>.

Also, the "Review and Analysis of the Literature on the Potential Adverse Health Effects of Dental Amalgam, published by the Life Sciences Research Office, Inc. (LSRO). This report was requested by the major U.S. health institutions. It involved the assessment of 950 scientific and medical studies relating to dental amalgam published between January 1, 1996 and December 31, 2003. To receive a copy, call Donna Krupa at (703) 527-7357 or djkrupa1@aol.com