

## Tooth coloured fillings



Tooth coloured fillings in back and front teeth

### What are they?

A filling replaces part of a tooth that has been lost because of decay or through accidental damage.

You may hear the dentist talk about 'composite', 'glass ionomer' and 'compomer' - these are different types of tooth coloured filling material.

### What will my dentist do?

#### Your dentist will:

- Usually numb the tooth and adjacent area with an injection - some small fillings may not need this.
  - Remove any decay, together with any old filling material, and shape the cavity using a small, high- speed drill.
  - Wash and dry the tooth by blowing water and then air onto it.
  - Use one of a variety of means to isolate the tooth and keep it dry. *Rubber dam may be used to prevent moisture interacting with the filling.*
- Apply a special adhesive to the tooth, typically in two or three stages, and then place the filling, again in stages.
  - Harden the filling material between stages of the filling procedure, by the use of a bright light shone inside the mouth – this is called 'curing'.
  - Trim the filling as necessary and then polish it, checking that you can bite together comfortably.

### What are the benefits?

- A tooth needs less drilling for a tooth coloured filling than for a silver filling.
- Unlike silver fillings, tooth coloured filling materials, which come in different shades to match different coloured teeth, are glued into place, sealing the filling and helping to strengthen the remaining part of the tooth. Tooth coloured filling materials can be used in most situations, including the filling of back teeth and making front teeth look better.
- When used in back teeth, tooth coloured fillings look better than silver fillings, but take longer to place, partly because they are finished and polished in one visit. Tooth coloured fillings may not wear as well as silver fillings but they do have the advantage that they can be repaired, rather than replaced, as and when something goes wrong.
- The longevity of a tooth coloured filling is greatly extended by good oral hygiene.
- *A tooth coloured filling may not be effective where decay extends under the gums, and may fail quicker. Rubber dam may be used to prevent moisture interacting with the filling.*
- *Tooth coloured fillings require more time to place and are therefore more expensive.*