

# Hawkeye Family Dental

1705 S 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Suite P – Iowa City, IA 52240 – 319-338-7172 - www.smilesforthefamily.com

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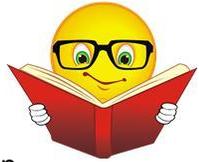
## Filled In

**A commonly asked question here at the dental office is, "Are amalgam fillings safe?"**

Amalgam fillings, also known as silver fillings, are safe. The concern lies in the fact that amalgam fillings contain mercury. However, the amount of mercury is very small, and when mixed with the other materials in an amalgam filling, the mixture is a completely different compound. Hundreds of studies have been completed on the safety of

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## Ask Kari



Dentistry is a language of its own. When you are here for cleaning appointments, we try to explain what is going on in your mouth in terms you can understand. The following are some commonly used terms that you may hear at an upcoming cleaning visit. As always, if we say something at your visit you don't understand, ask us, we are happy to explain it to you.

**Abrasion-** the wearing away of tooth structure at the gumline. It can be caused by brushing too hard, using a medium or hard toothbrush, or scrubbing the teeth in a back and forth motion. Abrasion presents as a notched out area at the gumline. Sensitivity may result due to the loss of tooth structure.

**Plaque-** a film of bacteria, food, and debris that has accumulated on the tooth surface and encourages the development of cavities and gum disease. Plaque can be removed with brushing and flossing at home.

**Calculus-** also known as "tartar," is a hard deposit that develops when plaque is mineralized and hardens. It only takes 24 hours for plaque to mineralize/harden into calculus. Calculus can only be removed with our special instruments at your cleaning appointment.

**Recession-** the loss of soft tissue caused by aggressive brushing, tobacco, grinding teeth, periodontal disease, piercings of lip or tongue, or tooth movement with braces. This tissue loss often results in exposure of the root surface, which can result in sensitivity.

**Gingivitis-** Inflammation of the gum tissue from a localized bacterial infection due to plaque build-up. Bleeding and red gum tissue are common signs of gingivitis.

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## As Seen on TV



**Do you ever wake up in the morning with an aching, sore jaw?** Maybe you have noticed your teeth look a little flat and worn? This could all be caused by unintentional grinding or clenching that most often happens during the night while sleeping. Grinding your teeth or clenching down with great force wears down the enamel and dentin of your teeth, resulting in a worn down, "flat" appearance. A professional nightguard, also referred to as an occlusal guard, can be an excellent solution to this problem. The nightguard acts as a buffer between the teeth and will limit the destruction from grinding. With a nightguard, the chewing surfaces of the teeth are covered and protected with a custom fitted, hard plastic device. Custom impressions assure the best and most comfortable fit for you as well as the best results in protecting your teeth from wear. If you think you may be grinding or have noticed that your teeth are looking shorter, ask us about a nightguard. It only takes two, short visits to our office. First, impressions of your upper and lower teeth are taken. Those impressions are used to make molds of your teeth that guide the construction of the custom nightguard. At the second visit, the nightguard is tried in and any needed adjustments are made to assure a tight and comfortable fit for you. If you think that you may benefit from a nightguard call us today for further information.

## \$ Money Matters \$ Insurance Payment Denials \$

Reasons for denials of coverage for certain services vary by plan and insurance company. Here are some of the most common reasons for payment denials:

**Frequency Limits –** Most plans have frequency limits for preventive, diagnostic and periodontal services, such as cleanings (including deep cleanings), exams, and x-rays. This means only a certain number of a particular service will be covered in a specific time period. It is also very common for dental plans to have frequency limits for fillings, crowns and other restorative work done on the same tooth over a certain time period.

**Age Limits –** The majority of plans place an age limit on services such as fluoride and sealants. These services might also have a frequency limit as well, so it's common to see a plan that allows, for example, fluoride applications twice per 12 months, up to age 18 and sealant placement once per tooth per 36 months, up to age 14. If you fall outside of those parameters in age and/or frequency, payment will be denied.

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# Happy Spring!



## *Filled In continued.....*

amalgam and it has been determined that it is a safe material. Occasionally, someone may have an allergy to amalgam, but these cases are extremely rare. The safety of amalgam has been confirmed by associations such as the U.S. Public Health Service, the American Dental Association and the National Institutes of Health. It has also been confirmed that there is no association between amalgam and human health by organizations such as Consumers Union, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Association. Two of the greatest benefits of amalgam fillings are cost and durability. They are usually less expensive and better covered by insurance than other fillings and they are strong and will last longer.

## *Ask Kari continued.....*

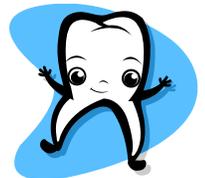
**Watch-** the start of a cavity, or a suspicious area that needs to be closely monitored. Watches can be determined by looking at the teeth clinically or upon evaluation of xrays. Watches typically do not go away, but the goal is to monitor the watch areas closely so that if they do progress the problem area can be addressed while it is still small.

## *Money Matters continued.....*

**Non-Covered Services** – Some plans do not allow coverage for certain services such as night guards and athletic mouthguards, implants and other major services like bridges, partials and dentures. If a non-covered service is performed and submitted to insurance, payment will be denied.

Stay tuned for the next newsletter when we explain more reasons for payment denials.

## Kids Corner



**Are you wondering at what age your child should have their first dental exam?**

Being a parent usually means having many questions about the health and well being of your child. Here in our office, parents often ask, "When should I bring my child in for their first check up?" All children are different and that's especially so when it comes to their teeth. Teeth typically begin erupting at 6 months of age but that can vary from 3 to 9 months of age and beyond. We suggest that you bring your child in for an evaluation 6 months after their first tooth comes in, or by age 1, whichever is first. At your child's first visit we will clean their teeth and check for any decay or abnormalities and discuss fluoride needs. We suggest that they come in every 6 months so that we can keep a close eye on the growth of their jawbone and eruption of their teeth. It is never too early to start practicing good oral hygiene with them. You should take the time to brush your child's teeth two times per day. Very little toothpaste is needed and it may even be a good idea to invest in toothpaste created especially for children. So, if you are not sure if it is time to bring your child to the dentist, just ask us. We are excited to start your children on the road to happy, healthy smiles!