

Posted by safeBABY on June 16, 2008



The FDA has revised its position on the safety of amalgams (silver-colored mercury fillings) for pregnant women and small children. A lawsuit by a group of consumer advocacy organizations prompted the revision on the FDA site, which now reads,

Dental amalgams contain mercury, which may have neurotoxic effects on the nervous systems of developing children and fetuses

Until now, the FDA had never admitted there were potential “neurotoxic effects” from mercury fillings. Despite the new admission, though, the FDA does not advise pregnant women to remove your silver-colored fillings because the process could expose you to mercury vapors. And while the agency says it doesn’t have enough information to advise women against mercury fillings altogether, it does say it will come up with a final decision and, potentially, more specific warnings by next summer.

Until then, here are some resources:

- [A Q&A](#) on mercury fillings from the FDA site
- [Symptoms of mercury poisoning](#) (Word doc) from Consumers for Dental Choice, one of the consumer advocacy groups that initiated the lawsuit with the FDA
- [State by state listings](#) of mercury-free dentists, from Consumers for Dental Choice
- [A complete list of dental filling options from the ADA](#); though, the section on mercury fillings still references the FDA as one of the agencies “satisfied” that they’re safe; to be fair I’m including a link to [a statement](#) from the ADA, which reinforces its position that silver-colored fillings are safe.

And some tips:

- Visit the dentist before you become pregnant, if possible
- Avoid chewing gum and grinding your teeth if you currently have silver-colored fillings (the FDA says mercury can be released via normal chewing activity)
- Consider gold, *composite (tooth-colored)** or glass fillings, though they are said to be less durable than the mercury fillings.

This post probably raises more questions, but the truth is that there aren't any easy solutions. Even [dentists are split](#) on the issue of silver-colored fillings. One thing is clear, though: everyone involved in this controversy is clear to say that you shouldn't avoid dental care if it's needed. Just get educated and ask smart questions, and make the best decisions you can.

** Be sure to [review this post](#) about dental sealants and composite (tooth-colored) fillings, which contain BPA but are said to be less harmful than amalgam (silver-colored, containing mercury) fillings.*