

Consumers for Dental Choice Campaign for Mercury-Free Dentistry

offered by Bill Wolfe, DDS, NMD



We're Protecting Your Community: Unfortunately, even if you and your children no longer have amalgam in your mouths, dental mercury can still harm you and your family. Amalgam – one of the largest consumer mercury uses – can contaminate your community's environment, convert to methylmercury, and re-enter your body via multiple pathways.

If you live near a crematorium, dental mercury emitted from cremated amalgam is in the air your children breathe. If you eat seafood, dental mercury that contaminates fish is on your dinner plate. If you buy vegetables, dental mercury may have been in the sludge that fertilized them.

We're Protecting Your Health: Despite being a toxic heavy metal, mercury has wormed its way into our dental care for the past 150 years. We know this was a horrific mistake. And it is time to stop it. *Consumers for Dental Choice* is working hard to do just that.

Children: Children's developing neurological systems are susceptible to the toxic effects of mercury vapor – a fact even acknowledged by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Unborn Babies: Mercury from pregnant women's amalgam can cross the placenta and pass to their fetuses during this critical stage of brain development.

Hypersensitive Individuals: Different people react differently to toxins like mercury, and even low exposure levels can be dangerous. So mercury is never safe – no matter what any health "authority" may say.

Dental Professionals: Studies show that dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and dental office staff – many of them women of childbearing age – can have higher systemic levels of mercury than the general population.

We're Protecting Mercury-Free Dentists: Recognizing that mercury has no role in 21st century dentistry, forward-thinking dentists increasingly renounce the outdated teachings of their dental school professors. With amalgam demand on the decline, mercury-free dentists are thriving.

It wasn't always that way. When *Consumers for Dental Choice* was founded in the mid-1990s, the situation was dire. Under the ADA's notorious gag rule (enforced by state dental boards), dentists could not freely discuss mercury with their patients. Only the most daring dentists told their patients the truth about mercury. These pioneers were harassed by dental boards; many even lost their licenses.

With support from mercury-free dentists, *Consumers for Dental Choice* organized a multi-faceted, grassroots campaign to fight the gag rule: obtaining a front-page press exposé in

California...initiating federal lawsuits in Connecticut and Maryland...achieving interventions by the state attorney general in Florida, Iowa, and Minnesota...securing assistance from lawmakers in Arizona...succeeding in placing mercury-free dentists on state dental boards in California and Washington...acquiring fact sheet laws that require dentists to tell their patients about mercury in Maine and New Hampshire...allying with civil liberty organizations dedicated to protecting dentists' First Amendment right to free speech...preserving threatened dental licenses in Alabama, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia...winning back dental licenses in California and Iowa.

Thanks to the courage of the many mercury-free dentists who fought with us through those battles, dental professionals now speak openly about mercury — and dental consumers are reaping the benefits. But remember, mercury-free dentistry is not here for everyone yet. Working families, children with disabilities, Medicaid patients, soldiers, prisoners, American Indians, and Appalachians are among the many Americans still subjected to mercury fillings. It's time to put an end to this primitive, polluting, pre-Civil War relic.

In addition to the mercury content of amalgam fillings, amalgam wreaks havoc on our oral health. Implanting an amalgam requires the removal of a significant amount of healthy tooth matter, which permanently damages the structure of that tooth. Then the amalgam expands and contracts over time. This causes the weakened tooth to crack...and this leads to more extensive – and more expensive – dental treatment...or even extraction.

So the pro-mercury dentists profit twice from amalgam: when they do the original drilling, filling, and billing...and again when that mercury filling fails.



We're Protecting Consumers' Rights: Pro-mercury dentists have long used the deceptive term “silver fillings” to lull their patients into acquiescing to mercury. More than 75% of dental consumers did not know that amalgam is mainly mercury, according to the polls. Many even believed that amalgam was just silver.

Consumers for Dental Choice has fought to end this consumer fraud since our founding. We are now fortunate to have help from Dr. Mercola, whose leading health newsletter champions the rights of consumers. Visit: www.mercola.com to read Dr. Mercola's latest article on our fight to protect dental consumers worldwide.

We battle for consumers' right to mercury-free dentistry all over the world now, but we began at the state-level (in a federal system of government, *that step is a must*). Along the way, we built a track record of success, including:

Starting in California with the Watson Law and then in several New England states, we worked to get information about mercury into the hands of the people who need it most – dental consumers. These mandated “fact sheets” are informing patients about the dangers of mercury in the dental office– and allowing them to exercise their right to choose mercury-free fillings.

Since we started our campaign, public awareness of dental mercury has skyrocketed. And as a result, amalgam use is heading for a nose-dive. In fact, over 75% of dental patients who know that amalgam is mercury say they would choose mercury-free fillings.

We worked to make sure that parents could choose mercury-free fillings for their children on Medicaid. Before, Medicaid would only cover amalgam for children; it reimbursed nothing if the dentist placed a composite. Now, most state Medicaid programs will pay the same for a child's composite as for an amalgam – making it more affordable for low-income families to protect their children from mercury.

But the war is not won. Many dentists still do not tell their patients that amalgam is mercury and that non-mercury alternatives are available. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is still burying important consumer information about mercury deep in its amalgam rule – where patients and parents are unlikely to ever see it. Insurance companies still refuse to fully cover non-mercury fillings, effectively depriving dental consumers of their right to choose mercury-free dentistry.

Consumers for Dental Choice is putting the brakes on this cycle of profiteering. Together, we destroyed the gag rule. Now, let's roll up our sleeves and finish the job. You can help us win the battle for mercury-free dentistry. Copy this link: <http://trulyalive.net/support-consumers-for-mercury-free-dentistry> and email everyone you know. Put the link on your Facebook page. Contribute today – for the sake of our children and all mercury victims tomorrow. Charlie Brown, Consumers for Dental Choice, 316 F Street N.E., Suite 210. Washington, DC 20002, 202-544-6333, www.toxicteeth.org.