

## **What to Expect: Composite (tooth-colored) Fillings**

The process of filling cavities is a fairly simple and straightforward one that can be done right at our office!

Depending on how many fillings are being done, your treatment time is around an hour long (give or take!) This gives our team enough time to take x-rays if needed, talk to you about the procedure and complete the dental work. Before filling cavities, your dentist will numb your teeth, gums and surrounding skin to avoid and lessen discomfort during the procedure. Next, they will drill out the decay in the tooth and replace it with a filling. Once you're done, your mouth will probably remain numb for a few more hours. There aren't any significant risks associated with filling cavities, but be sure to reach out to us if you have any questions or complications.

The most common use of tooth fillings is to fill a cavity in the tooth. But tooth fillings also can be used to repair damage to teeth caused by teeth grinding (bruxism) or to replace part of a broken tooth.

### **Types of Cavity Fillings**

There is a wide variety of materials used for filling cavities and they vary in strength and color. The two most common types are amalgam (silver) and composite (tooth-colored). At brush365, we strictly use composite to fill teeth.

### **Taking Care of Cavity Fillings**

You may experience some sensitivity and pain after receiving tooth fillings, but this discomfort should subside. OTC Advil is the recommended pain medication for any post-treatment discomfort. If you feel the pain may be associated with your bite not being just right, please come back to our office so we can make the necessary adjustments! Good oral hygiene and regular 6 month checkups with us at brush365 will help ensure the longevity of your fillings.

### **When to Replace a Filling**

Tooth fillings usually last for many years before they need to be replaced. But tooth fillings can wear out over years of chewing. If you clench or grind your teeth, you may need to have tooth fillings replaced sooner.

If you notice signs of wear on your tooth fillings, such as cracks or worn areas, see your dentist to have the filling replaced as soon as possible. Continuing to chew with a damaged filling can cause the tooth to crack and require additional repair that is more expensive and more complicated than a simple cavity filling. If additional tooth decay develops around a filling, whether or not the filling is damaged, your dentist may choose to repair the tooth with a crown instead of a second cavity filling.

It's important to know about potential problems, so you can see your dentist promptly to have cavity fillings adjusted or repaired. Possible complications from cavity fillings include:

- **Infection:** Sometimes a cavity filling will pull away from the tooth to which it is attached, creating a small space. This space can be a breeding ground for bacteria that can cause additional tooth decay. If you notice a space between your tooth and your cavity filling, visit a dentist as soon as possible.
- **Damage:** Sometimes a cavity filling breaks, cracks, or falls out. Damage to a filling can occur when you bite down on something hard or if you are hit in the mouth while playing sports. See a dentist as soon as you notice damage to a cavity filling to avoid irritation and infection of the unprotected tooth.