

## Fillings

### Why do I need a filling?

A filling replaces part of a tooth that has been lost because of tooth decay or through accidental damage. Sometimes the tooth can be sensitive or even painful, but not usually. If your tooth is not treated, then there is the possibility that the tooth will cause significant pain as the tooth decay infection spreads, resulting in nerve damage and abscess formation. Obviously it is better to prevent this rather than wait for the swollen face and sleepless night.

### What causes tooth decay?

Refined carbohydrates in the diet such as sugar cause tooth decay. Hidden sugars are in most processed foods and you may not realise that you are in fact eating sugar. Everyone knows about sweets and fizzy drinks, but not everyone is aware that added sugar can be found in biscuits, cakes, chocolate, jam, yoghurts, breakfast cereals and even savoury foods such as chutney, pickles and tomato sauce.

### What is involved in a filling?

The tooth is always numbed beforehand, so you can relax, confident in the knowledge that the procedure will be comfortable. The bad bits of the tooth are removed, leaving just the healthy part to be restored. Then, the surface of the tooth is “etched” with an acid solution that helps the tooth and filling bond together.

### How comfortable will it be?

Once the area has been numbed, you can relax. The local anaesthetic means that the procedure should be very straightforward. However, if you want to stop at any time for any reason, then all you have to do is raise your hand. Everything stops because you are in charge.

### What are the alternatives to filling a tooth?

Alternatives to filling a tooth are: do nothing (which we don't advise) or extraction of the tooth - but this is a last resort.

### What else do I need to be aware of?

Teeth don't like being drilled, the overall risks of a filling placement are:

- There is about an 8-10% chance that the tooth could require Root Canal Treatment, which would be at additional cost.
- Teeth can still decay due to sugar in your diet, poor oral hygiene measures like tooth-brushing and lack of professional care.

### What about afterwards?

Usually, the only side effect is a numb lip or tongue until the local anaesthetic wears off, approximately three hours or so later. It is possible that some post-operative soreness or sensitivity can take place.

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