

BE MERCURY-AWARE

A dental team faces many occupational hazards.

To minimise these we wear gloves, facemasks and safety-glasses to protect ourselves against infection and injury. We use an orange filter to protect our eyes from the fierce blue halogen light of the polymerisation lamp. We avoid contact with the monomers of composites and bondings in case of possible allergies. When making an amalgam filling we use free mercury. In this task we can recommend the following safety measures:

The dental team should avoid direct contact with the mercury. Measures must be taken to prevent exposure to mercury vapour, and waste amalgam must be collected in such a way that there is no risk either to the people who have to deal with it or to the environment.

1. Take great care when dealing with mercury and amalgam. BE MERCURY-AWARE.
2. Mercury should be worked and amalgam mixed on a separate part of the work surface with raised edges all around (not too close to a source of heat). This prevents any spilled mercury from spreading and enables it to be easily picked up. The floor of the consulting room should be smooth, without cracks, and the room must be well ventilated.
3. A powerful mixer should preferably be fitted with a protective hood that covers the capsule during mixing.
4. Droplets of spilled mercury can be picked up with a pair of mercury tongs or with a small quantity of recently mixed amalgam (this readily absorbs liquid mercury). NEVER use a vacuum cleaner!
5. Remove amalgam fillings under water-cooling and with appropriate suction. Wear eye and mouth protection.
6. The water-drain of the spittoon should be fitted with an amalgam separator. Allowance must be made for local regulations governing the type and installation of such a separator and the processing/recycling of amalgam waste.
7. Any excess mixed amalgam should be stored in a special 'Mercontainer' or, at least, in a sealed container with a fixing liquid.

You can minimise occupational hazards by using pre-dosed capsules from Cavex. These are guaranteed mercury-tight, so no mercury will be released during the mixing. That means safety both for you and your team!