



Call to Phase out Dental Amalgam by 2030

Mercury is used in dental amalgam, a filling material that is approximately 50% mercury. Recognizing that the amalgam era is over in dentistry, the European Union has taken the step to ban amalgam use and amalgam exports on 1.1.2025. This landmark action is good for the environment, good for consumer health, good for dental worker safety—and good for dentistry because:

1. Dental amalgam pollutes our air, water, and land:

Dental amalgam is the largest remaining intentional use of mercury in the Union and the UK.¹ Much of this dental mercury enters the environment via many unsound pathways, polluting (1) air via cremation, dental clinic emissions, and sludge incineration; (2) water via dental clinic releases and human waste; and (3) soil via landfills and burials. As a result, many people are exposed to a double dose of amalgam’s mercury: first when it is implanted in their teeth and a second time when it contaminates their environment and the fish they eat.

2. Mercury-free alternatives are available, effective, and affordable:

As the European Commission explained in its 2023 proposal to ban amalgam: “Considering the availability of mercury-free alternatives, it is appropriate to prohibit the use of dental amalgam for dental treatment of all members of the population...”² Studies show mercury-free composite fillings can last as long as – and even longer than – amalgam.^{3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10} Mercury-free fillings also offer both health and cost-saving advantages over amalgam. First, mercury-free fillings preserve tooth structure that must be removed to place an amalgam filling, which can increase the longevity of the tooth itself.^{11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21} Second, mercury-free fillings can help prevent future caries.^{22,23,24} Third, composite can be easier to repair than amalgam.^{25,26,27} Additionally, mercury-free alternatives eliminate the high environmental costs of amalgam (studies show that after environmental costs are factored in, amalgam is more expensive than composite).^{28,29}

3. The global trend is towards phasing out dental amalgam:

More than 60 countries worldwide have already banned the use of dental amalgam, declared no longer to use it or replaced it in the public health system, demonstrating that alternatives are effective, available and affordable.³⁰ No adverse clinical effects were reported.

The UK already has the building blocks in place for a move to mercury-free dentistry:

- NHS dental services (GDS) in Wales are currently aligned for the transition to minimally invasive mercury-free dentistry³¹ (already advanced in Scotland since 2023³²);
- Northern Ireland develops a plan to phase out dental amalgam³³;
- A public consultation to change NHS in England has seen widespread support for phasing out dental amalgam³⁴;
- The Environmental Improvement Plan is under rapid review and the Office for Environmental Protection recommends tackling other large emission sources of mercury (like dental amalgam) to meet the commitment by the 2030 deadline³⁵;
- The Medical Device Regulation in the UK is being revised to make medical devices safer³⁶; and
- The UK is a party to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and is preparing a position for COP6 on a proposal from the African region to phase out dental amalgam by 2030³⁷.

Therefore, we call on the government to move towards phasing out the use of dental amalgam in the UK and support the African Proposal at COP6 to end the trade and manufacturing of dental amalgam by 2030.

The undersigned:

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Florian Schulze, Managing Director, European Network for Environmental Medicine

Charles Brown, President, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry

Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife & Countryside Link

Stuart Colville, Deputy Chief Executive, Water UK

Dr A. Michael Warhurst, Executive Director, CHEM Trust

Paul de Zylva, Senior Sustainability Analyst, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and NI

Kate Metcalf, Co-Director, Wen (Women's Environmental Network)

Janet Newsham, Chair, Hazards Campaign

Meleni Aldridge, Executive Coordinator, Alliance for Natural Health

Dr Rob Collins, Director, Policy and Science, The Rivers Trust

Mark Owen, Head of Fisheries, The Angling Trust

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