



## Patient Information Leaflet

# Dental Fillings in Children's Teeth

Cork University Dental  
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of filling children's teeth and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or you would like further explanation, please ask us.

### **Why are fillings needed?**

Cavities are common in children. When children do develop cavities, they often need to be treated, even in primary (baby or milk teeth) teeth.

### **Should baby teeth be filled?**

Although the primary teeth do eventually fall out, it's important that they stay in place until the permanent tooth underneath is ready to replace them. The primary teeth will help your child to chew food thoroughly and develop proper speech patterns. They also serve to keep space for the permanent teeth.

### **What happens during a filling?**

Initially, the tooth may be numbed using a surface gel and a local anaesthetic. The dentist will then remove the decay, usually with a dental drill. The dental nurse will take away the water and materials from the mouth using suction. The dentist will then fill the cavity with silver filling (amalgam) or tooth-coloured filling (composite). Other materials are sometimes used. A metal band is sometimes placed around the tooth to act as a mould while the filling is placed.

### **What happens after a filling?**

As the numbness can last for a period of time after the filling, it is important to make sure your child is careful not to bite their cheeks, lips or tongue. Your child may feel some sensitivity on biting, or slight sensitivity to hot or cold for a short period of time after the procedure. The majority of fillings in children are in primary teeth but sometimes, the adult molar in a child may need to be treated. An adult tooth in a child is filled in a similar manner to a primary tooth.

If your child is diagnosed with a cavity, it also presents a good opportunity for you to discuss preventive care with the dentist. In this way, you can take steps to reduce your child's risk of further tooth decay.

This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients>