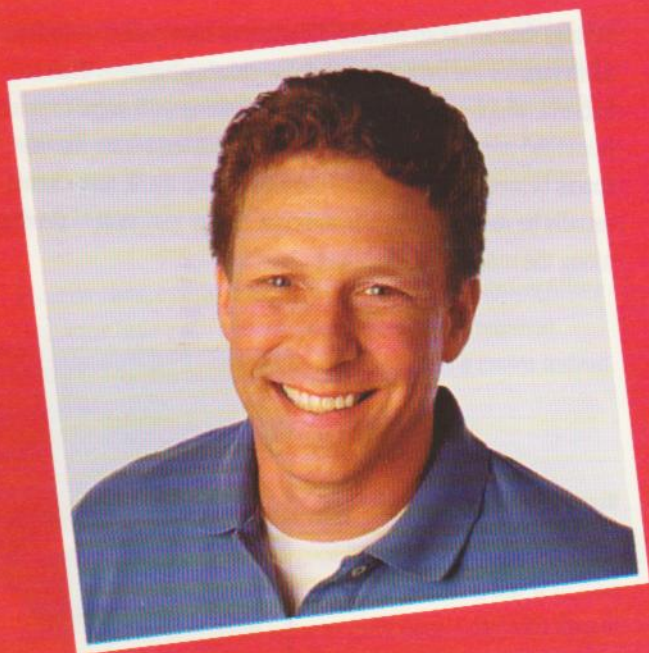


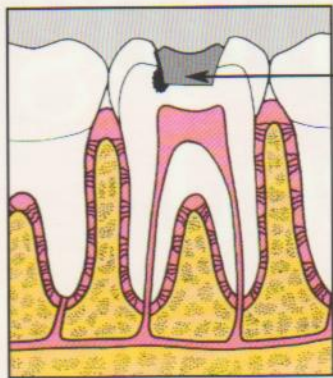
Why does
my filling
need
replacing?



ADA®

Why does my filling need to be replaced?

Dental fillings (restorations) may last many years before they need replacing. However, constant pressure from chewing, grinding and clenching may cause a filling to wear away, chip, crack or even fall out.

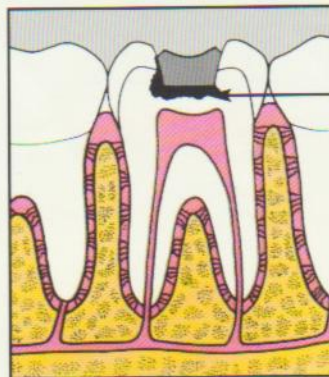


Tooth decay at margin of filling

Fillings that are worn around the edges or have pulled away from tooth enamel are invitations to decay-causing bacteria. The bacteria, which are present in saliva, combine with sugar or starch from food products to produce acids. The bacteria enter the tiny spaces between the filling and the tooth. Once there, they cannot usually be removed with a toothbrush. Decay may start to develop along the margins of the filling.



Worn filling with decay around edge.



Tooth decay under filling

Improper hygiene, improper diet, gum recession or decreased saliva flow might cause recurring decay. If the recurrent decay is not removed early, it eventually progresses into the soft dentin and then the dental pulp, the tooth's living core. If the damaged or diseased pulp is not removed, the tooth and the surrounding tissues can become infected.

Regular dental examinations are important because fillings that are broken or no longer intact generally can be detected in the early stages. During your checkup, your dentist can determine whether existing fillings are intact, or if any have cracked or worn away. Worn fillings should be replaced promptly before decay begins.

In some cases, extensive tooth decay around an existing filling may leave little tooth structure once the decay is removed. Your dentist may need to restore the tooth with a crown instead of a filling.

Take care of your teeth.

Keep your teeth and gums in good health with regular dental visits and professional teeth cleanings. Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. And clean between teeth once a day with floss or an interdental cleaner to remove decay-causing bacteria that toothbrush bristles can't reach. Look for oral hygiene products that display the American Dental Association's Seal of Acceptance, a symbol of safety and effectiveness.