

# Mercury Studies Censored by Industry Leaders

By Dr. Mercola

Efforts to stop the archaic practice of using amalgam “mercury” fillings have been gaining speed, with several significant milestones taking place in 2013.

The culmination took place in October, when a legally binding international treaty to control the use of this toxic metal was signed into action (and, victoriously, the treaty gives special attention to the use of amalgam).

A sign that the issue of mercury toxicity is becoming well established in the dental field came when two publications – *Dental Tribune* and *Dentistry IQ* – posted articles online

The articles addressed a letter from environmental, health, social justice, and consumer groups from 40 nations calling on a leading amalgam manufacturer to cease the toxic trade in dental mercury.

The articles, which appeared in September and October, mysteriously disappeared, however, and now it’s been confirmed that Dentsply was behind the disappearance of at least one of them.

## Amalgam Manufacturer Effectively Silences Mercury Toxicity Info

The *Dental Tribune* acknowledged that they removed the mercury and Dentsply articles “because [they] received a big complaint from the company [Dentsply].”<sup>1</sup>

The move has environmental and health activists worried that the industry bigwig has no plans to stop their mercury manufacturing and, instead, may be simply switching their target markets. According to Consumers for Dental Choice:<sup>2</sup>

*“The censored Dental Tribune piece included references to ‘the treaty on phasing down the use of amalgam’ and widely held concerns that ‘the dental companies will dispose of mercury-containing filling materials in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.’”*

*...Fears that Dentsply might now be looking at developing countries as major markets for mercury-amalgam fillings were heightened after Dentsply's sponsorship of a conference in Birmingham, England, in August.*

*A critical theme of the conference — ‘the demise of amalgam’ — appeared to apply only to the distribution of amalgam products in European countries. By taking the unusual step of censoring these articles in prominent dental publications, Dentsply has exacerbated those fears.”*

## Are Amalgam Manufacturers Planning to Sell Their Toxic Wares to Developing Countries?

The [international mercury treaty](#) mandates that each nation phase down amalgam use. But there is concern that amalgam manufacturers such as Dentsply are seeking ways around this treaty, which when ratified by 50 nations will be legally binding. Consumers for Dental Choice reported:<sup>1</sup>

*“...health and environmental activists from around the world sent a letter to Dentsply CEO Bret W. Wise, urging him not to use the treaty's provision on the ‘phase down’ of mercury-based dental amalgam as a pretext for dumping its products in developing countries. This was precisely the course of action that American tobacco companies took after the U.S. and many other governments began issuing warnings about the dangers of smoking in the 1960s.”*

Ironically, amalgam is only a tiny portion of Dentsply's annual profits, as the company also makes other dental materials, so they could easily stop selling this toxic substance. The company could adopt a phase-out plan of its own and stop selling the material to dentists, a move that would not only improve patients' health but also the environment.

Exiting amalgam might be welcome news to Dentsply shareholders, who in past years have filed petitions with the Securities and Exchange Commission to get answers from Dentsply's board of directors about its intentions on amalgam.

As it stands, Dentsply, as an aggressive manufacturer and marketer of mercury fillings, is also one of the world's major mercury polluters. Amalgam contributes an estimated 10 percent of environmental mercury pollution, which means that amalgam manufactured by Dentsply and other major manufacturers is in fact causing direct harm to the environment.

Mercury from dental amalgam is released into the air when people are cremated, for example. It also enters soils and waterways, where it becomes a major contaminant of our food supply.

The sad fact is that American taxpayers pay the many indirect costs that dentists are causing by polluting your environment with mercury. It's time the pro-mercury dentists either stop using amalgam or pay for the damage they're contributing to. Truly, any responsible dentist in today's day and age would simply stop using amalgam -- and any responsible corporation would stop making it.

Currently, Dentsply is being challenged to switch to mercury-free alternatives, both via a grassroots campaign in York, Pennsylvania (where the company is based), and a call from environmental and social justice organizations on six continents not to dump amalgam in developing nations.

Dentsply is already planning its exit from Europe. But if the children of Europe are no longer getting mercury in their mouths, why should the children of North and South America, Africa, or Asia still be getting mercury in theirs?

## Pakistan Hospital Bans Mercury Fillings Over Health Hazards

Earlier this year, research conducted in collaboration with the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute found that some dental hospitals in Pakistan had hazardous levels of mercury pollutants in the air.<sup>4</sup>

The study found some dental teaching hospitals with indoor air levels of mercury between eight and 20 times higher than the permissible level for human health, posing risks not only to patients but also to medical staff.

In response to the study, Polyclinic hospital in Pakistan has become the country's first to ban mercury fillings, citing hazards to human health. Dr. Pakiza Hyder, who heads Polyclinic's dental surgery department, said:<sup>5</sup>

*"...it is seen that toxic mercury vapors leak and travel throughout the body before being deposited in vital organs and causing multiple health problems. Mercury vapors are not only harmful to patients but dental surgeons and their assistants, too, are exposed to them. In this light, we've banned mercury fillings."*

In a study of amalgam use in the central African nation of Cameroun, the Research and Education Center for Development found that at least one hospital in the capital city of Yaoundé has been amalgam-free for years. So mercury-free dentistry can work in the hospitals of Asia and Africa!

The International Association of Oral Medicine and Toxicology—Philippines and Ban Toxics also recently passed a resolution asking Congress to pass a law that would stop the use of dental amalgam in children.<sup>6</sup> So it's clear that mercury-free dentistry is gaining global momentum.

## Tips for Removing Your Mercury Fillings

For those of you who have mercury fillings, I recommend that you have them removed... but avoid making the mistake I did nearly 20 years ago. I had the procedure done by a non-biological dentist. When you have these fillings removed you can be exposed to significant amounts of mercury vapors if the dentist doesn't know what he or she is doing.

Replacement of amalgam is a serious medical procedure. Do not go to a dentist who does not fear the toxicity of mercury and who does not use a protocol that both builds up your strength beforehand and limits in every possible way your exposure to mercury.

You can find a mercury-free dentist of your own on [Consumers for Dental Choice's website](#), or check out dental listings from their close allies at the [International Academy of Biological Dentistry and Medicine](#) and the [Holistic Dental Association](#) – two dental associations whose support for mercury-free dentistry has been unflagging. It's also for this reason that I strongly suggest you get healthy BEFORE having your fillings removed, as you want your detoxification mechanisms optimized prior to removal. My struggles with my own teeth led me to learn about and embrace biological dentistry, also known as holistic or environmental dentistry.

In a nutshell, biological dentistry views your teeth and gums as an integrated part of your entire body, and any medical treatments performed takes this fact into account. The primary aim of holistic dentistry is to resolve your dental problems while working in harmony with the rest of your body. Biological dentists are well aware of the dangers involved with toxic materials such as mercury fillings (aka amalgams). Some things that need to be done to keep you (and your dentist) safe during amalgam removal include:

- Providing you with an alternative air source and instructing you not to breathe through your mouth
- Using a cold-water spray to minimize mercury vapors, and putting a rubber dam in your mouth so you don't swallow or inhale any toxins
- Using a high-volume evacuator near the tooth at all times to evacuate the mercury vapor
- Washing your mouth out immediately after the fillings have been removed (the dentist should also change gloves after the removal)
- Immediately cleaning your protective wear and face once the fillings are removed, and using room air purifiers

## The Plan Moving Forward

Getting the mercury treaty was just the first step. “The treaty gives us the framework we need to make mercury-free dentistry a reality for everyone,” says Charlie Brown. “But now it’s up to us to see that it is implemented effectively.” The treaty will require nations to take two of the listed phase-down measures... but some of these measures are more effective at phasing down amalgam use than others. Here is a summary of the best treaty measures for phasing down amalgam use, as supported by the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry:

- **Promoting Mercury-Free Dental Fillings:** This measure includes educating dental consumers about the mercury in amalgam and the availability of mercury-free alternatives. As Zogby polls have shown, over 75% of consumers choose mercury-free fillings as soon as they find out amalgam is 50% mercury. So this step is proven to phase down amalgam use.
- **Training in Mercury-Free Alternatives:** Dental schools should phase out amalgam instruction. In the interim, nations can require training on mercury-free alternatives for dentists and tell government-funded dental schools to teach students how to use mercury-free dental fillings and techniques, while not requiring competency exams on amalgam and not permitting students to use amalgam in children in school dental clinics.
- **Adjusting Government Programs and Insurance:** Most people end up with amalgam not because it is the least expensive material or it is the best option for their health (it never is), but because it is all their insurance or Medicaid will pay for. Therefore, governments should urge insurance companies to fully cover mercury-free alternatives and no longer purchase amalgam for use in government programs (like for our soldiers and sailors in the military).
- **Making a Plan to Minimize Amalgam Use:** Setting goals to minimize amalgam use is a good first step to start phasing down amalgam.

## How You Can Support Mercury-Free Dentistry–Sign This Petition to Dentsply

An estimated 40-50 percent of dentists in the US no longer use amalgam. That’s a good start, but it’s not enough. I urge you to get involved in this issue to help us phase out amalgams entirely.

As mentioned, Dentsply is a leading manufacturer of mercury fillings – and it's time to tell them to stop.

Please take a moment to [sign this petition](#). For additional timely updates and information, please [join Consumers for Dental Choice on Facebook](#).