

Written by Andrea H. Brockman, B.S.N., D.D.S.

Wednesday, 01 June 2011 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 September 2013 13:58

---

Renee Jamison, a 37-year-old senior manager at a financial services firm, realized that she was spending most of her non-working time trying to recuperate from the workday. Describing herself as a type-A personality driven to succeed in her career, raise a family and keep physically fit, Renee worked long hours, went to the gym, shopped at the health food store, and tried to spend quality time with her husband. The fact that she was burned out and suffering from fatigue, headaches and allergies didn't stop her from also trying to get pregnant.

Renee had already stopped eating fish because of the mercury warnings. But now one of the cusps of a molar with a giant amalgam had just fractured, and she had a problem. She had read somewhere that silver fillings contained 50 percent mercury. "It was too soon to tell if I was pregnant, but I had to do something with this tooth," says Renee. "It was beginning to hurt." Renee's dentist, whom she had been going to for years, assured her that amalgams were safe; however, she preferred to be cautious and not expose herself to an aerosol of mercury from drilling out her large filling. "My dentist told me that the pain may be a worse stress for the pregnancy and my obstetrician suggested that I get the tooth fixed. I just didn't know what to do."

Dental health can affect your overall health as well as the health of a developing fetus. The fact that medical doctors have little to no training in dentistry, and that dentists aren't licensed to treat the whole body, has created a void in healthcare. Physicians rarely look at teeth and gums and most don't ask about a health history of dental infections, surgeries or the condition of dental work. Yet there is mounting evidence of the links between periodontal disease and heart disease, diabetes and pre-term births. Also, so many people suffer from digestive problems, obesity, headaches and allergies, that medical doctors fail to make the connection to dentistry and seldom consult or refer to a dentist.

Written by Andrea H. Brockman, B.S.N., D.D.S.

Wednesday, 01 June 2011 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 September 2013 13:58

**HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE**

# Health-Conscious Dentistry

Dental amalgams are 50 percent mercury. Should expectant moms be concerned?

By Andrea H. Brockman, B.S.N., D.D.S.



**R**enee Lamson, a 37-year-old senior manager at a financial services firm, realized that she was spending most of her non-working time trying to recuperate from the workday. Describing herself as a type A personality driven to succeed in her career, raise a family and keep physically fit, Renee worked long hours, went to the gym, shopped at the health food store, and tried to spend quality time with her husband. The fact that she was burned out and suffering from fatigue, headaches and allergies didn't stop her from also trying to get pregnant.

Renee had already stopped eating fish because of the mercury warnings. But one day at the shop of a motor with a great amalgam had just factored, and she had a problem. She had read somewhere that silver fillings contained 50 percent mercury. "It was too soon to tell if I was pregnant, but I had to do something with this tooth," says Renee. "I was beginning to hurt." Renee's dentist, whom she had been going to for years, assured her that amalgams were safe; however, she preferred to be cautious and not expose herself to an aerosol of mercury from drilling out her large filling. "My dentist told me that the pain may be a worse stress for the pregnancy and my obstetrician suggested that I get the tooth fixed. I just didn't know what to do."

Dental health can affect your overall health as well as the health of a developing fetus. The fact that medical doctors have little to no training in dentistry, and that dentists aren't licensed to treat the whole body, has created a void in healthcare. Physi-

cians rarely look at teeth and gums and most don't ask about a health history of dental infections, surgeries or the condition of dental work. Yet there is mounting evidence of the links between periodontal disease and heart disease, diabetes and pre-term births. Also, so many people suffer from digestive problems, obesity, headaches and allergies, that medical doctors fail to make the connection to dentistry and seldom consult or refer to a dentist.

**How Are Biological Dentists Different?**

Dentists, skilled in restoring and replacing teeth, have differing opinions regarding biocompatibility of dental materials, effects of certain oral infections on the immune system, and treatment protocols for tooth and jaw imbalances that distress the oral musculoskeletal system. The International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), The Holistic Dental Association (HDA) and the International Academy of Biological Dentistry and Medicine (IABDM) are a few of the organizations that have established training programs, scientific studies, strict biological treatment standards and yearly conferences for biological dentists—and yet they represent less than half a percent of practicing dentists. Their common premise is the firm belief that dental products and procedures affect the entire body. Biological dentists are taught to work closely with other members of the healthcare profession, including environmental physicians, acupuncturists, chiropractors, naturopaths, nutritionists, body workers and other holistic practitioners.

Biological dentists are not just "mercury-free." They believe that proper nourishment, detoxification, and restoration of balance and function is of paramount importance in overall health, and that dentistry plays a vital role. They adhere to the Hippocratic Oath—"First, do no harm"—and take hundreds of hours of continuing education, read studies published throughout the world, and make an enormous investment in special equipment and supplies that are necessary for health-conscious and mercury-safe dental interventions. Biological dentists take professional risks by challenging long-established standards of care in dentistry. Many have suffered legal and state board consequences, and the unfortunate result is that biological dentists are few and far between. This presents a dilemma for individuals who seek health-conscious dentistry.

**Being Your Own Dental Advocate**

From her own research, Renee read that mixed metals in the mouth can cause an electrical current known as galvanism. "I was concerned that if I needed a crown, that it may contain some type of metal," she says. "I read that you should not keep an amalgam under a metal crown because of the galvanism. Besides, I still have other amalgams in my mouth and wear a retainer with metal wires."

The controversy in dentistry over mercury exposure from dental fillings was causing her anxiety and confusion. She treated her dentist, but did not want to take any chances (no matter how

small) with this pregnancy. It took her years to convince, and her age meant she was considered to be a high risk. From what she had read about the fish warnings and the toxicity from mercury to the nervous system of a developing fetus, Renee just didn't feel right about this dental procedure that she needed. The problem was that her dentist didn't agree with her philosophy or have any training or the necessary equipment for safe removal protocols.

Renee had to take matters into her own hands and become her own dental advocate. She used it to herself and her baby. Armed with information downloaded from the websites of biological dental organizations and consumer groups, Renee set up a consultation appointment with her dentist to be able to explore treatment options and protocols that satisfied her requirements for health and safety. While she realized that her dentist might not have all the protective equipment, Renee learned of safe guards and detoxification actions she could apply on her own. There was no question in her mind that this discussion with her dentist was a positive health choice and helped to reduce her stress: one less thing to give her a headache.

**Dr. Andrea Brockman is President of Chelateda International, a health and wellness consulting company that helps educate and promote the integration of oral and systemic health for improved overall health and vitality. She is the author of the healthLites Dental Resource Guide and informational booklets such as "Take a Minute: Get Out of Dentistry for Women," and a contributing author of the book Health-Proof: The 5 Elements of Strategic Wellness. For more information on dental health concerns, visit [www.chelateda.com](http://www.chelateda.com).**

## The Safety Debate Continues

In its December 2010 hearings to evaluate the safety of amalgams, the FDA's own scientific panel—including neurologists, toxicologists, epidemiologists and environmental health specialists—expressed concern about amalgam use in children, pregnant women and hyper-sensitive populations. To date, the FDA has not responded to these concerns.

The World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry and Consumers for Dental Choice, however, have been active throughout the world in negotiations for a "phase-down" of mercury. In the latest round of this global debate, the United States government has announced that it supports a "phase-down" of mercury amalgam. The U.S. recommends that nations "educate patients and parents in order to protect children and fetuses."

### DENTAL AMALGAM: 7 TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

The placement of new amalgams and the drilling process to remove old dental amalgam releases a large quantity of mercury vapor. Since most dentists do not have the equipment in their office necessary for safe mercury removal, you can help protect yourself and your children.

- Request that all new fillings be mercury-free.** Dental amalgam contains 50 percent mercury. During placement and initial setting, the mercury vapor released is quite high. Composite resins do not contain mercury and are durable, esthetic restorations.
- Take two capsules of activated charcoal with a full glass of water at the dental office just prior to your appointment time.** If an amalgam needs to be removed, some particles may be swallowed. The charcoal will attract the mercury to be excreted through the gut rather than absorbed into your blood stream.
- Open a capsule of chloroxil and spritz the contents under your tongue before drilling.** Chloroxil is a green gel that absorbs mercury. Once the drilling is done, the chloroxil (and the mercury) can be rinsed from the mouth, rather than being absorbed through the mucous membranes.
- Protect your clothing, hair and skin.** During the drilling procedure, you can wear a disposable shower cap and protective goggles. Ask your dentist to apply clothing barriers and oxygen or nitrous oxide through a nasal respirator.
- Take poisoning of vitamins C after your appointment.** Vitamin C is a weak chelator for mercury, meaning that it can attract mercury from the bloodstream and help flush it out of your system. Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid taking vitamin C prior to your appointment, because it may interfere with any getting numb.
- Eat meals with high sulfur content.** Mercury is attracted to sulfur-containing molecules. A perfect meal would be eggs cooked with onions, topped with salsa made with fresh garlic and cilantro.
- Take a bath.** The skin is the largest organ for detoxification. Pull out toxins by having a good, long soak in a bathtub infused with a cup of Epsom salts, ½ cup of baking soda, and the brush of toothed tooth gingiv.



This article is reprinted in [Pathways to Family Wellness](#) magazine, Issue #30. You can purchase this issue [Order Here](#).