



Comparison of Amalgam vs. Composite Restorations

Composite: A mixture of submicron glass filler and acrylic resin that forms a solid tooth-colored restoration. Self- or light-hardening at mouth temperature.

Pro's	Con's
Esthetic dental fillings and veneers	Sensitivity varies; Sensitivity can last up to 6 mo after placement
Mimics natural tooth color and translucency	Can be subject to slight staining and discoloration over time
Good in small-to-moderate size restorations	Cost is moderate; Actual cost of fillings depends on size and technique
Adhesive bonding permits removing less tooth structure	Must be placed in well controlled field of operation; very little tolerance to presence of moisture during placement
Moderate resistance to fracture in high-load restorations	Can wear against normal tooth structure or porcelain
Well-tolerated with rare occurrences of allergic response	
Low leakage	

Amalgam: A mixture of mercury and silver alloy powder that forms a hard solid metal filling. Self-hardening at mouth temperature.

Pro's	Con's
Good to excellent durability	Leakage is moderate
Tolerant to a wide range of clinical placement conditions, moderately tolerant to the presence of moisture during placement	Requires more removal of tooth structure for adequate retention and thickness of the filling
Highly resistant to wear and good bulk strength	Brittle, subject to chipping on filling edges
Well tolerated with rare occurrences of allergic response	Early sensitivity to hot and cold possible
Generally lower cost; actual cost of fillings depends on size	Silver or gray metallic color does not mimic tooth color