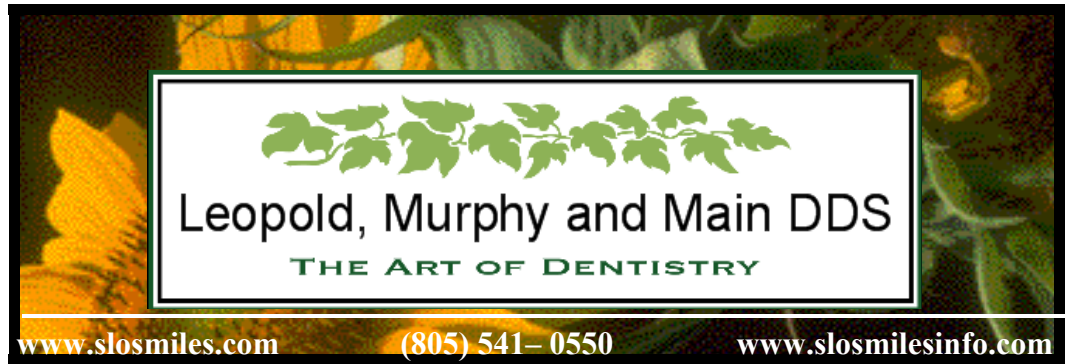


Inside this issue:

Did you know? 1
Insurance Benefits 2
Word Search 2
Happiness & Thanks 3
All Under One Roof 4



Did you know?

On October 19, 2010, Costa Mesa, California became the first city in the United States to ban mercury-based fillings (amalgam). This could very well be the first step to getting the material banned entirely country wide and globally as well.

The American Dental Association stands firm in defending the safety of amalgam however there are many dentists, physicians, naturopaths and scientists who disagree. The later claim that because the filling material contains between 40-50% mercury, a known potent neurotoxin, it should not be used as a dental filling material. They state that mercury vapor is released during the chewing function and when exposed to heat. Neurotoxins can cause memory loss, headaches, loss of coordination, weakness, kidney damage, respiratory damage, infertility, birth defects, and psychiatric effects. Mercury has also been linked to Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Arthritis, and Lupus.

According to the Environment Protection Agency, approximately 50% of mercury entering wastewater treatment plants comes from dental amalgam waste. Once deposited, microorganisms can change elemental mercury into methylmercury, a highly toxic form that builds up in the body of fish, shellfish and animals that eat fish, i.e.: humans. The EPA expects to propose a rule next year to be finalized by 2012, which requires dental offices to use equipment called Amalgam Separators. Amalgam separators can separate 95-99% of mercury from wastewater normally discharged to our local waste treatment plant. Here at Leopold, Murphy and Main an amalgam separator has already been installed. We have also reduced our mercury waste by using digital imaging equipment instead of traditional x-rays.

The following is a comparison of the pros and cons of amalgam and composite filling material:

Amalgam - made of 50% mercury and 50% silver, tin, copper and zinc.

Pros - durable, easy to use, highly resistant to wear and costs less than other material.

Cons – short term sensitivity to hot and cold, does not have a natural tooth color, your dentist must remove more of your tooth structure to accommodate an amalgam filling (amalgam is a somewhat brittle substance which requires more bulk for strength), slight risk of allergic reaction to one of the metals used in amalgam and some large fillings have as much mercury in them as a thermometer. The biggest disadvantage with amalgam is that it doesn't bond to the tooth's outer walls, weakening the tooth structure. Statistically, most teeth that require crowns have previously had large amalgam fillings.

Composite - a mixture of glass or quartz filler in a resin medium.

Pros – most esthetic choice of filling material since it comes in a variety of shades to match your particular tooth color, less tooth structure needs to be removed when using resin. The bond between composite and the tooth is very strong so it resists tooth fracture.

Cons – takes longer to place a composite filling and it requires more skill by your dentist, it is subject to discoloration over time, may cost a little more than amalgam.

Our philosophy is to take the conservative approach on the mercury controversy. We decided long ago to use composite material instead of amalgam. We believe it's the best choice for our patients, ourselves, and the environment. We do *replace* old amalgam fillings with composite when needed or requested by our patients. Being proactive in replacing the weaker amalgam with a strong composite is often in the patient's best interest.

(Continued on page 3)



Amalgam

Composite

Insurance Benefits Decoded

A brand new year is just around the corner. Many dental plans follow the calendar year as the Plan Year and benefits renew on January 1. It's a good time to really understand dental insurance terminology and how it affects your benefits. First and foremost, it's important to note that your dental insurance is not meant to completely pay for all of your dental care, just to share the cost. Some plans pay a higher percentage than others, it all depends on the plan your employer or union chose to offer its employees.



Preferred Provider: This is a dentist who participates in the benefit plan's network of providers. These dentists have agreed to discount their fees in order to be included in the network. Leopold and Murphy are Preferred Providers for Delta Premier. However, we accept and bill for all insurance (except HMO) as a courtesy to our patients. **If you choose to see a dentist who is not a Preferred Provider for your policy you should still receive benefit but it won't be the maximum amount that you could receive from a Preferred Provider.**

Usual, Customary and Reasonable (UCR): These plans pay what they consider to be "customary", "reasonable" or a percentage of the dentist's fees, whichever is less. These fees may or may not reflect the fees that dentists in our area are charging. In fact, you may receive an Explanation Of Benefits (EOB) that indicates your dentist charged you more than UCR. This does not mean that you have been overcharged, in fact, there is no regulation as to how insurance companies determine reimbursement levels.

Least Expensive Alternative Treatment Provisions: Often insurance companies will opt to pay for a **less expensive treatment even if it is not the optimum treatment available.** For example, our office only uses composite for fillings however, the insurance company may only pay for amalgam because it is less expensive. The patient is responsible for the difference in cost. The provisions vary widely and your benefit is based solely on the plan your employer has chosen.

(Continued on page 3)

ALTERNATIVE
AMALGAM
COMPOSITE
ENVIRONMENT
FLEXIBLE
INSURANCE
MERCURY
PREFERRED
PROVIDER
REDUCE
REIMBURSED
TAX
TOXIC
VAPOR

M	Y	D	I	W	S	R	V	J	D	U	E	Y	E	N
C	E	I	F	R	T	E	O	K	A	L	C	X	N	P
T	P	R	O	V	I	D	E	R	B	Z	M	E	V	O
W	E	M	C	U	G	U	X	I	A	Y	U	Q	I	C
O	T	V	K	U	T	C	X	E	N	R	T	Y	R	E
M	H	E	E	F	R	E	T	I	S	O	P	M	O	C
A	L	P	A	N	L	Y	G	H	T	P	D	I	N	E
G	U	E	R	F	I	F	A	E	L	A	O	V	M	J
L	A	L	T	E	R	N	A	T	I	V	E	S	E	P
A	M	N	I	T	F	E	C	N	A	R	U	S	N	I
M	Y	B	G	O	C	E	M	U	D	P	N	A	T	S
A	S	W	I	X	E	T	R	Y	B	O	T	Y	A	V
C	B	P	K	I	E	G	X	R	I	O	A	M	T	A
O	A	L	H	C	I	O	D	S	E	T	X	Q	M	B
R	E	I	M	B	U	R	S	E	D	D	O	I	N	G

Insurance Benefits Decoded continued from page 2

Plan Frequency Limitations: Certain procedures may simply not be covered as often as necessary for optimal oral health. A common example might be a plan that pays for tooth cleaning only twice a year even though the patient requires cleaning every three months.

Not Dentally Necessary: The plan provides benefits for services and materials that it considers dentally necessary and meet accepted standards of care. Based on the information your dentist submits, the service may not appear to meet plan criteria and no benefit may be allowed. This does not mean that the services were not necessary. Our standard practice is to include any supportive clinical data at the time the claim is submitted in order to reduce the possibility of a denial of benefits.

More food for thought... a trend in the Dental Insurance industry is leaning toward prevention. Patients who refuse to follow through with periodontal treatment recommendations may not only be jeopardizing their periodontal health but their restorative dental benefits as well. Insurance companies are denying claims for crown and bridge when the patient's periodontal health indicates that the crown or bridge will fail due to poor periodontal maintenance. Insurance companies are beginning to hold patients responsible for maintaining good oral hygiene and follow through with preventative care.

Happiness is a butterfly, which, when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)



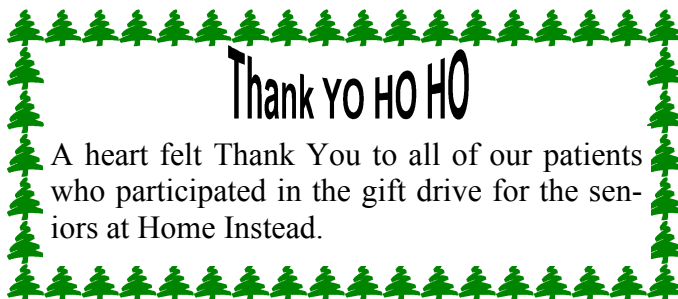
(Continued from page 1)

When we remove amalgam from a patient's mouth, we perform the following safety procedures to minimize mercury vapor exposure to our patient and the dental team:

1. Use a constant supply of cool water on the filling to keep the metal cool, minimizing the mercury vapor that is released.
2. Remove amalgam in large segments also to minimize mercury vapor and amalgam particulate.
3. Use an efficient suction system in the mouth with a special tip to contain amalgam particles and mercury vapor.
4. Provide our patient and the dental team with a

clean air source.

If you are concerned with old fillings that you have, we can evaluate them to determine which may be most susceptible to fail and discuss your treatment options.



A heart felt Thank You to all of our patients who participated in the gift drive for the seniors at Home Instead.



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LEARN MORE ON OUR:
 WEB SITE- WWW.SLOSMILES.COM
 BLOG- WWW.SLOSMILESINFO.COM

The Art of Dentistry

Mission Statement

Our mission is to deliver quality, comfortable dental care to you, our patient. We are committed to treating you in a respectful compassionate, and timely fashion. We will strive daily to educate you on the importance of your oral health and its implications as it relates to your body as a whole. Our goal is that when you leave our office, you will feel good about your dental experience.

JOINING THE ELECTRONIC AGE

We are pleased to announce that we have begun to send our newsletter electronically. If you haven't done so yet, please visit our web site and go to the "contact us" page where you can send us an e-mail with your e-mail address.

AND...

Believe it or not, we are blogging and tweeting too! Who ever would have guessed? Please visit and/or follow us at:

www.slosmiles.com (web site)
www.slosmilesinfo.com (blog)

From our blog site you can join us on Twitter by clicking the blue T icon and follow the directions.

All Under One Roof

Leopold, Murphy and Main DDS is much more than your General Dentist. We offer the following services and home care products:

- Cosmetic Dentistry
- Digital X-Rays
- Endodontics
- Invisalign
- Implants
- Laser Surgery
- Night Guards
- Oral Cancer Screening
- Oral Sedation
- OralDNA Lab Tests

- Periodontal Maintenance
- Sealants– Children & Adults
- Sulcular (Gum) Laser Decontamination
- Veneers
- Whitening

Home care products:

- Oral-B Triumph
- Oxyfresh 3000 and Waterpik Ultra Oral Irrigators
- Oxyfresh Toothpaste, Rinse and Soothing Gel

- Thieves Toothpaste and Mouthwash
- TheraSol
- MI Paste and Dry Mouth Gel
- Bleach Refill Kits
- Cold and Canker sore medication
- CariFree Treatment & Maintenance Kits

