

## What are Composites?

New developments in dentistry now allow us to treat children's teeth better than ever. Not so long ago, if a child had a cavity in a molar tooth, the dentist had to remove the decay, drill out a retention (undercut) area in the tooth, and then place a silver amalgam filling. The silver filling took on a gray or black appearance and often darkened the color of the tooth. In addition, because of its metallic nature, thermal changes in the mouth as a result of hot or cold foods often produced some sensitivity in the tooth.

Unlike silver amalgam fillings, the newer bonded composite restorations are tooth-colored and very pleasing cosmetically. They adhere to the tooth by mechanical and chemical bonding to make them strong and highly resistant to wear. Because they are bonded to the tooth, much less tooth structure is removed in preparing the tooth for a filling. This adds greatly to the child's comfort and helps create happier dental patients. A further advantage is that the bonding process allows the dentist to desensitize the tooth, thus virtually eliminating post-operative discomfort in the filled tooth. These bonded restorations are such an improvement that we no longer place silver amalgam fillings in our pediatric patients.

Although the use of composite resin restorations has been researched and approved by the scientific community and the dental profession, the insurance industry has been slow to modify existing contracts to provide benefits for these restorations. We urge you, as the subscriber to the dental plan, to carefully check your insurance plan's coverage. If there is no coverage for composite restorations on posterior teeth, we encourage you to speak to your company's benefits coordinator and recommend that this benefit should be added to your policy. If your company's contract excludes composite resin restorations on posterior teeth, you will be responsible for the balance after contractual allowances are deducted. If you have any questions pertaining to our use of composite, please contact our office.