

WEST HOUSE DENTAL PRACTICE

WORKING WITH AMALGAM

All those involved with the handling of mercury in any form should understand its potential hazards and receive training in safe handling procedures to deal with mercury spills, including the safe disposal of contaminated materials.

Mercury is a hazardous substance and we need to prevent their staff from unnecessary exposure to it. Wherever possible, we will use safer alternatives but where this is not practicable we will use it in a safer form. Pre-proportioned amalgam capsules are used routinely in the practice.

The following guidelines should be followed:

Working environment

- All surgeries must be well ventilated. Opening windows to encourage a fresh supply of air to help reduce atmospheric mercury below the maximum permitted level.
- Floor coverings in dental surgeries are non-slip and impervious. Joints in the floor covering are kept to a minimum and sealed.
- Amalgam should be prepared away from any form of heat (radiator, autoclave and sunlight, for example). All work surfaces are smooth and impervious to prevent mercury accumulating in inaccessible areas.

Personal hygiene

- Encapsulated amalgam reduces the risk of exposure to mercury.
- If hands have been exposed to mercury, wash them immediately with liquid soap in a stream of cold tap water until no stain on the skin is seen. Use disposable towels for hand drying.

Personal monitoring

- Members of staff will be assessed for risk of exposure to mercury taking into account the method used in preparing amalgam, the amount of work carried out each week, the measures taken to prevent spillage and vapour release and the level of ventilation (*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002*).

Amalgam waste

- Amalgam waste should be stored in a sealed, clearly labelled container under mercury suppressing solution or paste.
- Disposal of waste amalgam, waste mercury and used amalgam capsules is controlled and must be collected by a person licensed to carry hazardous waste. The relevant consignment notes should be completed and kept for three years.

Reviewed 14th May 2018

Next review date May 2019 or as necessary