



Dr Grant McAree

Ask Dr. Grant



DR GRANT IS ONE OF THE LEADING COSMETIC DENTISTS IN THE SOUTH WEST AND HAS TREATED PATIENTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION AND BEYOND. HE HAS BEEN GRANTED PRACTISING PRIVILEGES AT NUFFIELD HOSPITAL, EXETER

Cosmetic white fillings – what’s the story?

What are we talking about?

Fillings which are shade-matched to your natural tooth colour so they look like they’re part of the original tooth and don’t stand out. Cosmetic fillings now come in a wide range of shades and degrees of translucency, meaning they can be readily matched to the existing tooth. Advanced materials mean they now also reflect the light in the same way as tooth enamel, again helping to make them look natural.

Tell me more

It may come as a surprise to you, but white or tooth-coloured fillings aren’t just for filling cavities or replacing old silver amalgam fillings but can also be carefully shaped to aesthetically restore worn down or uneven teeth, to fill minor gaps at the front of the mouth or to renew dark teeth.

Why choose cosmetic fillings?

Many people simply don’t like the fact silver amalgam fillings show when they talk or laugh plus there’s the ongoing debate surrounding their mercury content, although findings are inconclusive.

Anything else?

When used to fill gaps or to restore teeth, cosmetic fillings can often produce quite

dramatic improvements whilst still offering what is frequently a more affordable option compared to other restorative or cosmetic treatments. They also represent a minimally-invasive option, with less of the natural tooth generally having to be removed. As a dentist, my overriding concern is to conserve as much of the natural tooth as possible, which is why I’m always reluctant to replace old silver amalgams for purely cosmetic reasons.

Any other considerations?

Cosmetic fillings are highly technique-sensitive, as they require a completely dry treatment surface which is, of course, tricky to achieve in the mouth! There’s also the problem of shrinkage during setting, although one of my preferred ways to avoid this is by using white composite inlays. With these, an impression is taken

and the filling made in the lab, so it can be rebuilt to the original dimensions following any shrinkage before being placed in the mouth.

Do they last as long as amalgams?

It’s true that silver amalgam fillings invariably last longer, but recent advances have meant that cosmetic fillings can now be made from materials comparable to amalgam. Cosmetic fillings may also need periodic resurfacing, especially if stained through smoking.

Costs?

Prices vary according to the size of the filling and complexity of the case, however starting guideline prices are: small £85, medium £90, large £125; white composite inlays from £400; resurfacing (as part of a scale & polish/hygiene appointment) £50. **EL**

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AUTHOR UNKNOWN**

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