

# Ask Leyla: Should I have metal dental fillings removed to reduce mercury exposure?



**Q:** My daughter is seriously considering having the silver fillings in her teeth removed in order to protect her future children from toxicity and possible learning disabilities. What are the health risks to her—not getting it done vs. getting it done?

**A:** I applaud your daughter for being proactive in her health!

Mercury is a powerful neurotoxin. There are two major sources of methylmercury—which is the form most humans are exposed to: Silver dental amalgams and toxic seafood. Small amounts of mercury are released from dental amalgams which is a major source for those with dental fillings.

According to the EPA:

*“Mercury becomes a problem for the environment when it is released from rock and ends up in the atmosphere and in water. These releases can happen naturally. Both*

*volcanoes and forest fires send mercury into the atmosphere. Human activities, however, are responsible for much of the mercury that is released into the environment. The burning of coal, oil and wood as fuel can cause mercury to become airborne, as can burning wastes that contain mercury."*

Once mercury is released into the air, it settles into nearby bodies of water or even onto land where it can be washing into nearby lakes and streams. Microorganisms in the water convert it to methylmercury where it builds up in fish and shellfish. Some of the highest seafood sources of methylmercury include:

- Shark
- Swordfish
- King mackerel
- Tilefish
- Tuna
- Marlin

According to the EPA, possible symptoms of methylmercury poisoning may include:

- Loss of peripheral vision
- "Pins and needles" feelings, usually in the hands, feet, and around the mouth
- Lack of coordination of movements
- Impairment of speech, hearing, and/or walking
- Muscle weakness

Moreover, the EPA states: "Children exposed to methylmercury while in the womb can have impacts to their cognitive thinking, memory, attention, language, fine motor skills, and visual spatial skills."

For the proper removal of dental amalgams with the least amount of toxic exposure, I strongly encourage seeking out a dentist trained in such procedures. Usually these are holistic and biologic dentists.

To your health!