

DENTURE MATERIALS

Patients have not needed to know anything about dental materials because dentists have decided for them which materials were to be used, usually based on structural criteria or cost. Because of changing paradigms, controversial issues, and my knowledge of alternative healthcare philosophies, I no longer feel it is proper or possible for me to make that choice. Being a patient in *this* practice now means you will be made aware of all known options so that you can choose the material. Please understand that only you really know what is appropriate based on expectations, healthcare philosophy, time, cost, practicality, and lifestyle, and that it is you, not I, who will live with that decision 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Dental Material Concepts:

1. **CONVENTIONAL:** Except in rare situations, currently used dental materials are safe in the mouth. The important criteria are how durable, natural-looking, and practical it is for the dentist and dental laboratory to use.
2. **ALLERGENIC:** Because some people have allergic reactions to certain substances, the choice of dental materials may have to be limited. Blood tests may be utilized to determine allergenic potential.
3. **TOXICITY:** Some dental materials contain toxic substances which, depending on exposure and other factors, may cause a variety of health problems from resultant dysfunction of the immune system. Non-toxic alternatives should be used to significantly decrease exposure to and accumulation of environmental toxins.
4. **INTERFERENCE FIELDS:** Some dental treatment and materials can be disruptive to the normal flow of energy through the acupuncture meridians. Eastern philosophy believes chronic disruption of energy flow causes dysfunction and resultant health problems, therefore choice of dental materials and treatments is limited.
5. **ELECTROGALVANISM:** Dissimilar metals in the mouth, including different formulations of the "same" metal, create microamps and millivolts of electric current which could cause oral pain, corrosion of the metal, dry mouth, unpleasant taste, erythema, and possible dysfunction of other organ systems.

Metals:

Metals are used to increase rigidity and retention of partial dentures. Chromium-cobalt is the commonly used metal, but gold alloy and titanium are alternatives. Titanium is very light, gold is heavy, and both are more expensive. Stainless steel is used just for clasps around teeth in temporary or inexpensive partial dentures.

Synthetics:

Acrylic is the commonly used synthetic, but nylon, vinyl, styrene, and silicone are alternatives. Many pink-colored synthetics contain cadmium which is used for color stabilization. It is considered toxic by some. The alternative is to use cadmium-free pink, white, or clear materials. Nylon is used for non-metal partial dentures because it is flexible and can therefore be used for clasps. Vinyl, styrene, and nylon is used for full dentures, and partial dentures with metal. Silicone is used for gasket-type clasps in "convertible" partial dentures where the few remaining teeth are compromised or mobile.

This information is provided for educational purposes only, and should not be considered a recommendation for any particular treatment, product, or philosophy. You have the sole responsibility to examine the benefits and risks of available options and decide what treatment, if any, is to be rendered. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution grants the right to discuss openly and freely all matters of public concern, and to express viewpoints no matter how controversial or unaccepted they may be.