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Dentally Speaking

by Jeffrey S.

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Is your dentistry affecting your health?

Dentistry has evolved dramatically over the years, yet many individuals still have outdated dental work that may be impacting their overall health. While traditional metal crowns and mercury fillings were once the standard in restorative dentistry, modern research has uncovered potential risks associated with these materials. Additionally, failing dental work doesn't always cause pain, break, or fall out, and as a result

many people are completely unaware they have underlying dental issues. The longterm effects of neglected or aging restorations can include periodontal disease, dental abscesses, and even adverse effects on the heart and immune system.

The health risks of outdated dental work

- Toxicity and systemic effects
- · Structural concerns
- · Periodontal issues

· Heart health concerns

Toxicity and systemic effects

Dental amalgam, commonly known as mercury or silver fillings, has been used for decades due to its durability and affordability. It contains a mixture of metals, including mercury, silver, tin, and copper. Over time, amalgam fillings may release small amounts of mercury vapor, particularly when chewing or consuming hot foods and

beverages. The body naturally eliminates most of this exposure, but some individuals, especially those with mercury sensitivities or pre-existing health conditions. may prefer to opt for alternative materials. As a result. many advanced dental professionals

now offer porcelain restorations, composite resins, and other biocompatible options as safer and more aesthetically pleasing alternatives.

Structural concerns

Beyond potential health implications, outdated metal fillings and crowns can compromise the structural integrity of teeth. Metal fillings expand and contract with temperature changes, which can lead to fractures in the tooth structure. weakening natural teeth and increasing the risk of breakage or decay beneath the filling. Many patients are unaware of these fractures until they experience a broken tooth, require a root canal, or face another dental emergency.

Being proactive with dental care can help prevent these issues. Replacing aging restorations with porcelain alternatives provides a more predictable and durable solution and also can help with stability for chewing and function. Additionally, poorly fitted metal crowns can cause bite misalign-



Periodontal issues

Metal dental restorations can contribute to gum inflammation and periodontal dis-

ease. Ill-fitting crowns and aging metal fillings create small gaps where bacteria accumulate, leading to infection and gum recession. These "food traps" are not just an annoyance for patients—they can also cause serious gum health issues.

Additionally, some individuals experience allergic reactions or sensitivities to metal, resulting in chronic irritation and inflammation of the gums. Over time, this can lead to bone loss, tooth instability, and an increased risk of severe periodontal disease. Replacing older dental work with modern materials can close these gaps, restore teeth to their proper contours, and significantly improve gum health.

Heart health concerns

There is a well-documented connection between oral health and heart disease. Older dental restorations, particularly those that contribute to periodontal disease, can increase the risk of cardiovascular problems.

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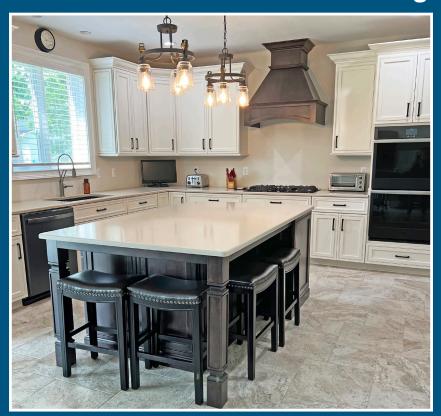
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Gum disease caused by bacterial buildup around old metal crowns and fillings can lead to chronic inflammation, which has been linked to an increased risk of heart attacks

Bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream, causing plaque buildup in arteries and affecting overall heart function. By addressing outdated dental work and improving oral health, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing serious heart conditions.

The Modern Solution: Safer, **Healthier Alternatives**

While older dental work may have been effective in the past, the long-term health risks associated with aging restorations cannot be ignored. Mercury exposure, metal sensitivities, structural weaknesses, and cardiovascular risks all pose real threats to overall wellness. Fortunately, advancements in dentistry have introduced safer and more effective alternatives to traditional

metal crowns and mercury fillings.

Today's materials, such as porcelain and biocompatible composite resins, offer superior durability, aesthetics, and health benefits. These modern solutions not only restore function but also help to eliminate the risks associated with outdated materials.

Upgrading your older dentistry is a proactive step toward better overall health. If you have outdated dental work or are unsure if you do, consulting an advanced dental office that specializes in modern restorative techniques could be a life-changing decision.

Jeffrey S. Haddad, DDS of Rochester Advanced Dentistry, completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies.

He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ and sleep disorders and dental implants. For more information, visit www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com.

What are vernal ponds?

Vernal pools are shallow ponds that dry up after a few months. Also also called vernal pools or ephemeral pools, these shallow, seasonal pools of water are a distinctive type of wetland that allow the safe development of natal amphibian and insect species unable to withstand competition or predation by fish.

Vernal ponds are an important part of a healthy ecosystem. They



host common trees that like to have wet feet, such as red and silver maple, American elm and dogwood; common herbaceous or non-woody plants such as sphagnum moss, jewelweed, false nettle, mad-dog skullcap and rushes and sedges. The plants provide food and nutrients for the animals who live there, including invertebrates (aquatic insects), crustaceans, dragonflies, mayflies, mosquitoes and others. Many of these depend on the vernal ponds for their life cycle. Amphibian species include frogs and salamanders who migrate to breed and then leave before the ponds dry out.

Vernal pools are regulated under Michigan wetlands law. Two local ponds are at Dinosaur Hill and Seven Ponds beginning in March. Skunk Cabbage is a favored plant at these ponds.

Coyote sightings are on the rise in Michigan neighborhoods

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, covotes are more visible in Michigan from January through March because it is their breeding season. If you spot a coyote in your yard, scare it away by implementing hazing tactics. Shout, wave your arms and

clap your hands, use noisemakers or bang on objects. Other effective techniques for discouraging covotes include fences, removing food and water sources (such as birdfeeders), using scents coyotes dislike, and utilizing motion sensor lights and sprinklers.