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Did You Know Your Mouth Is One Of The Best Places To Store Mercury?

October 22, 2015



As Australasia's leading mercury recycling company, CMA Ecocycle recovers hundreds of kilograms of mercury each year.

Mercury is a very useful metal. It's a key component in fluorescent lighting, some types of batteries and is used in a range of industrial processes.

It also makes up about half the weight of the dental amalgam that is used to fill the cavities caused by tooth decay.

Your Mouth Is A Surprisingly Safe Place

While mercury is toxic in its metallic form, our mouths are a surprisingly safe place in which to 'store' it. That's because in an amalgam filling the mercury is combined with silver and tin, effectively trapping it in an alloy.

Mercury dental amalgam has been used for over 150 years, and still offers benefits over some other types of fillings.

Closing The Loop

The concept of a closed recycling loop is that a material recovered from a particular product is recycled back into the same product. That's exactly what happens with dental amalgam.

From time to time fillings need to be replaced. Responsible dentists install amalgam separators that trap any dental amalgam waste that goes down their sinks. When full the amalgam separators are sent to the recycling plant where they are cleaned out and the mercury is separated and purified. The liquid metal is then sold back to dental manufacturers to make new amalgam.

Closed loops don't come any better than that.

Make Sure Your Dentists Captures And Recycles Their Mercury

Without an amalgam separator the fillings eventually end up in wastewater treatment plants.

There, some types of bacteria convert the mercury into methylmercury. This is a really toxic compound that can build up in fish, including species that we are rather keen on eating, in fact mercury build ups often end up in unexpected places, like elephant seals.

So while you may be playing your part in keeping mercury out of the environment with your mouth, you may be able to magnify the good you are doing by encouraging your dentist to install an amalgam separator.

More Than Just Teeth

Dental amalgam is just one source of mercury. Other sources are [fluorescent lighting](#), [electronic waste](#) and [batteries](#), along with [mining and chemical industry waste](#).

From all of these sources we recover hundreds of kilograms of mercury each year, but with the dental industry in Australia requiring many times that much we are a long way from saturating this particular loop.

So talk to your dentist about amalgam recycling. Recycle your light globes and batteries. And next time you polish your pearly whites, if they happen to be speckled with a few amalgam fillings, then give yourself a pat on the back. You are playing an important role in one of the most important closed recycling loops in the world.

Start Recycling Today

If you're a dentist, or you work with other mercury products, why not fill in the form below or **call 1300 32 62 92** to get in touch with us today to find out how we can help you capture and recycle your mercury waste.

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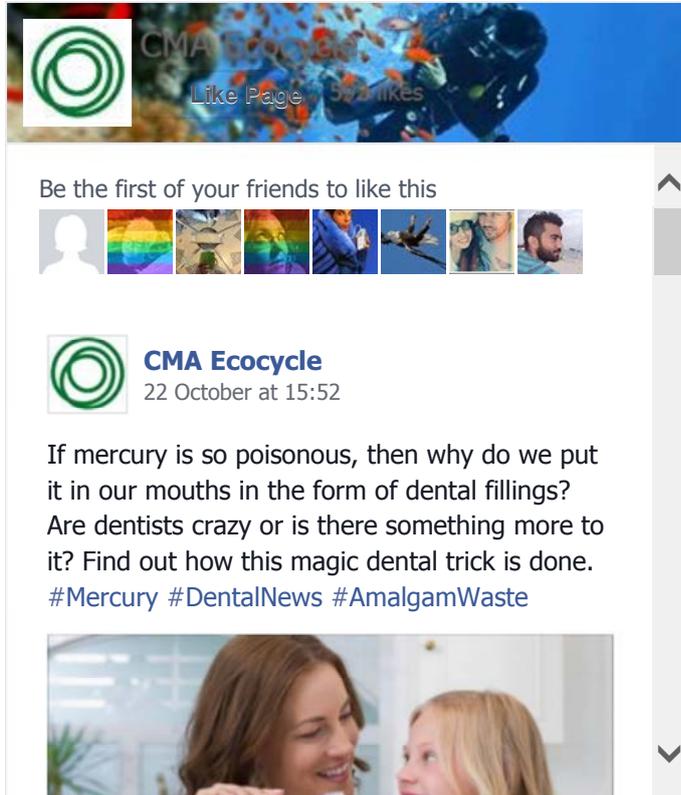
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