

EPA Proposes Requirements to Reduce Discharges of Mercury from Dental Offices

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On September 25, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed new requirements aimed at decreasing discharges of dental amalgam (which contains mercury and other metals) into our public water. At this time, some studies show that more than half of all mercury detected in public water treatment plants is from fillings. If approved, the new requirements will call for dentists to control mercury discharges by installing amalgam separators and implementing certain other practices. Many dentists already do their part to reduce mercury, as various states require these separators, and the ADA has recommended the use of amalgam capture devices for a number of years. In fact, according to the EPA, 40 percent of dentists in the United States already have systems in place to reduce the discharge of mercury when removing fillings or extra amalgam when placing a new filling. The EPA expects to finalize this rule in September, 2015. In the meantime, the EPA will accept public comments on the proposal for 60 days following publication in the Federal Register and a public hearing is also scheduled for November 10, 2014. For more information, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/q4548ya>.

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