



Dr. Willock: connecting the health care dots in holistic dentistry.

## Removing Mercury *Helps Memorable Patient*

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**A holistic approach to oral health and wellness**

**D**r. C. Michael Willock, a talented and committed holistic dentist, frequently sees patients who fear that the mercury amalgam fillings in their mouths may underlie serious health problems.

One such memorable patient, a woman in her mid-thirties, traveled from Fayetteville to consult with Dr. Willock in his Chapel Hill office about the symptoms and treatment of toxic poisoning.

"She told me she was in constant pain," he says, "and pretty dramatically said she thought her muscles were dying. It's a comment that certainly gets your attention. Further, she reported intense pressure in her head and an unrelenting fierce headache. She had been to a number of doctors seeking relief, without success.

"She asked me if I thought removing her amalgam fillings—half mercury, half other metals—might help her regain her health. Her own research had convinced her that she might be suffering from mercury toxicity.

"There was no foolproof way to assure her that removing her amalgam fillings would help overcome her health problems, but I also shared my belief that one of the best things we can do is rid the body of as many known toxins as possible.

"That, of course, includes mercury—one of the most poisonous metals on earth—and other environmental toxins that may be around us such as pesticides, cleaning solvents, and mold that might cause a reaction in our bodies. When we rid ourselves of these substances, we can give our bodies a chance to heal and regain balance while providing proper nutrition."

### IMPRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT

This thoughtful and frankly desperate young woman, after consultation with her physician, proceeded to have Dr. Willock replace her silver-mercury fillings with ceramic, non-toxic materials.

"Within several months, we got the good news," says Dr. Willock. "The patient reported really impressive improvements in her health and sense of well-being. She said her muscles felt 85 percent back to normal, and she was overjoyed to wake up in the morning and be free of pain. We checked with her again several months later, and she reported still further improvement—now, she said, about 95 percent of normal in terms of muscle and pain relief."

Dr. Willock himself has high sensitivity to mercury, and experienced a dramatic improvement in his own health after removal of metal from his mouth.

"That fact served to fuel my interest in holistic dentistry," he says, "which to me means understanding that the health of the mouth is linked to the health of all parts of the body.

"Over the years of continually stressing the teeth by chewing and thermal cycling, there's an accordion effect that eventually cracks the teeth. Amalgam—principally made up of mercury and silver—gets brittle, and from the day it is placed, it begins to leak because it does not bond to the tooth, but is rather a tight 'press fit.' Mercury and silver are positive ions that repel each other, like two common poles of a magnet, creating outgassing.

"Now we have superior materials to place in teeth, such as composite resins and ceramics, which do bond to the tooth and seal it much better. In terms of my own health, I believe it is greatly improved because all of the mercury contained in amalgam fillings has been removed from my mouth."

### PASSIONATE STUDENT

An accredited member of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology ([www.IAOMT.org](http://www.IAOMT.org)), Dr. Willock is one of the few dentists in the area who has had extensive training in the safe removal of amalgam fillings.

He continues to learn about, and be amazed by, connections between oral health and organ systems throughout the body. He continues extensive travels and studies as he broadens his general practice to include many aspects of holistic dentistry, simply, he says, "to better understand and address the overall health concerns of all of my patients. Dental health and physical and emotional health are inextricably linked. My goal is simply to better understand those connections when it is helpful to my patients to do so."

His studies in the past 18 months, in locations throughout the country, have included gaining expertise in biological dentistry, links between acupuncture meridians and oral health, homeopathic remedies with dental applications, blood chemistry, nutrition and supplementation, environmental and detoxification issues, and critical relationships between oral health and general physical health.

As he pursues his on-going studies, Dr. Willock says, "I become more deeply aware of the connections that exist in all parts of the human body. In dental school, we're taught how to expertly address issues that clearly affect the health of the teeth, which is certainly important and appropriate. And there is the growing field of holistic dentistry that seeks to expand this understanding of health issues.

"Two recent cases—one involving my own dental health—help explain this point of interconnectedness of all of our parts. Recently a woman came to me (another memorable patient) who had two crowns, upper left, that needed replacing. I looked under one of the crowns and found very old amalgam, perhaps residing there for 30 or more years. She asked that it be removed. In simple terms, amalgam with a metal crown covering it produces a galvanic reaction.

"This woman has suffered with moderate tinnitus—ringing in her ears—for many years. When I removed the old amalgam filling and replaced it with a temporary filling, her tinnitus dropped in half instantly—like turning off a light switch. Two weeks later, when we placed the permanent crowns, her hearing improved even more. Her signs of tinnitus are barely discernable. I expect them to clear up completely soon, when other old metal crowns are replaced.

"In my own case, I had a root canal that failed. It turns out there was a micro abscess at the very tip of the root. Interestingly enough, I had been having problems with my left arm for about six months, with discomfort and some loss in range of motion—which of course is a real problem for a dentist. I had one of my oral surgeon friends remove the tooth, and within 10 minutes—while I was still sitting in his dental chair—I felt a flush of well-being move through my entire body. Since then, the range of motion in my arm is improving. It's probably better than 90 percent healed right now, and I expect it to be completely healed soon." **h&h**