

August 21, 1996

D.D. No. 45

THE SAFETY OF DENTAL AMALGAM

This letter is to advise you of Health Canada's position on the safety of dental amalgam and recommendations for its use. Many Canadians are concerned over the risk of mercury toxicity from amalgam, partly as a result of recent proposals by some countries to place severe restrictions on its use, or to ban it entirely.

To respond to these concerns, Health Canada has recently completed an extensive review of amalgam, including a study of existing scientific data, an assessment of mercury exposure from amalgam, a review of regulatory positions by other countries, and consultations with the dental profession, dental material manufacturers, academic researchers, provincial health ministries, and concerned citizens.

The conclusions and recommendations of this study are summarized in the attached position statement as a guidance to you in advising and treating your patients. The following documents are also available free of charge:

1. Health Canada's position paper *The Safety of Dental Amalgam*
2. A Health Canada report entitled *Assessment of Mercury Exposure and Risks from Dental Amalgam*.
3. The *Final Report of the Stakeholder Review Committee*

These reports may be ordered from:

Publications
Health Canada
Address Locator 0900C2
Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0K9
Tel: 613-954-5995
Fax: 613-941-5366

This letter and the above documents are also posted on the Environmental Health Directorate Website at <http://www.hwc.ca/dataehd/> and Health Canada's Health Information Net electronic bulletin board service (BBS) at <http://www.hwc.ca:8300>.

Le Sous-ministre adjoint

Kent R. Foster
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the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.*