



Hazardous Material Fact Sheet

Dental Amalgam & Extracted Teeth Disposal

Amalgam

Dental amalgam is an alloy used in dentistry to fill cavities caused by tooth decay. It contains about 50% elemental mercury by weight, combined with a powdered metal alloy containing silver, tin, and copper. For questions related to amalgam or extracted teeth disposal, please contact EHS at 402-559-6356.

- Dental amalgam is considered a hazardous waste due to its high mercury and silver content.
- Amalgam cannot be disposed of in regular trash, flushed down the drain, or placed in biohazard (sharps) containers.
- Dental clinics must use amalgam separators to trap amalgam scrap from chairside traps, vacuum pump filters, and other sources before it enters the sewer system.
- Amalgam scrap must be collected and recycled through a licensed amalgam waste recycler. Companies that service the amalgam separators can handle this waste or a mail-back program. (See below for options)
- In Lincoln and Omaha, dental clinics can utilize Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) for amalgam disposal. Store amalgam scraps in a tightly sealed container (see picture below) labeled as "Waste Amalgam." Once the container is full, tag it with a chemical collection tag and contact UNL EHS (if generated at the UNMC College of Dentistry in Lincoln) or UNMC EHS (for all Omaha locations) for pick-up and proper disposal.

Extracted Teeth

Extracted teeth are considered regulated medical waste.

- Place extracted teeth into a sharps container and dispose of as biohazardous waste.
- Give extracted teeth with gold restoration to the patient or place them into a sharps container.
- Disinfect extracted teeth with amalgam restoration with Cavicide or 10% formalin and dispose of in the amalgam scrap container.
- Clean extracted teeth (no amalgam) used by College of Dentistry students in the pre-clinic laboratory of visible blood or debris and store in 10% formalin for two weeks to disinfect them. After disinfection, store the teeth in water or saline solution. When no longer needed, dispose of the teeth in a sharps container.

Amalgam mail-back recycling container options:

Wastewise

Their containers are available for purchase through our preferred vendor in Ariba, Henry Schein Dental Supply. Prepaid shipping and an EPA-compliant Certificate of Recycling are included.

Healthfirst

Pricing is cheaper when ordering directly from them versus using Ariba. Prepaid mail-back services provided by UPS are included with purchase.

Solmetex

Solmetex offers a variety of disposal kits for all sizes and types of dental practices. Additional information: [Amalgam Bucket Instructions](#).



Reference: <https://www.ada.org/resources/ada-library/oral-health-topics/amalgam-separators>