



### What are fillings?

A cavity is a hole in a tooth. A dentist may suggest cleaning out this hole to remove the bacteria and decay. This hole is then filled with a material to protect the tooth. This is called a filling.

### What types of fillings are there?

The type of filling material is usually based on the size of the cavity and your child's risk for getting more cavities.

Some cavities are very small and do not need to be fixed with the usual kind of filling. At Boston Children's Hospital, you and your child's dentist decide on the type of treatment.

**Smaller cavities** in primary teeth may be filled with a fluoride-based material, a plastic based material (white fillings) or a metal-based material (silver fillings).



**Large cavities** in baby teeth may need to be treated with a silver cap, also called a stainless steel crown. We often do a nerve treatment, called a pulpotomy. This is performed underneath a silver cap if the cavity reaches into the nerve of the tooth.



### Stainless steel crowns



Expose

Infected

Medicate

Stainless

### How can cavities be prevented and stopped?

To avoid the need for fillings:

- Know that fixing cavities with fillings makes teeth look and work better, but fillings do not fix the problem.
- Take your child to the dentist for regular care to prevent cavities.
- Help your child brush at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss once a day.
- Try to have your child stay away from candy and sugary foods too.
- Your dentist may have specific suggestions for your child to lower their risk for cavities.

### Contact us

For more information, visit  
[bostonchildrens.org/dentistry](http://bostonchildrens.org/dentistry)

To make an appointment, call  
**(617) 355-6571.**