



# Why Won't a Filling Do Here?

R.S.Hendry DDS BSc  
[www.drhendry.ca](http://www.drhendry.ca)



## Because teeth with large fillings break.

We see it all the time. (These are typical examples from just a few of our own patients' mouths.)

A filling just fills a hole - it doesn't reinforce the tooth. The larger the filling - and the less real tooth there is to hold it in - the greater the likelihood that it will fracture.

Waiting until it breaks is not a good strategy. Often too much tooth breaks away, and the remains can only be extracted.

Removing the tooth is actually the most expensive option in the long run. Teeth drift, the bite deteriorates, and gum and jaw problems increase. Replacing a lost tooth generally costs several times as much as restoring one fully before it fractures

## It Doesn't Have to Happen!

When a tooth is too weak to safely support a filling, it just needs something stronger before it breaks: an inlay, onlay or crown.

An inlay or onlay is a single piece of a structural material (traditionally gold, but now white composite or ceramic), custom-made and bonded into the tooth to fill the cavity. They are much stronger than simple fillings, because they reinforce the remaining tooth structure. These are suitable for teeth that are too weak to sustain a filling, but don't need the full protection of a crown

Crowns are for the weakest teeth. A crown fully covers and protects the tooth, restoring it to its original strength.

We have more information on both, but the most important decision is not to wait until the tooth has broken apart and it's too late!

