

# European Union Poised to Ban Toxic Dental Amalgam

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The European Commission has proposed a ban on dental amalgam as of January 1, 2025. This includes not only the use but also the manufacture and export of dental amalgam. The European Parliament and Council must ratify the proposal for it to become law
- › Once amalgam is banned in the EU, it'll be difficult for the U.S. and Canada to hold on to the barbaric and archaic practice of loading neurotoxic mercury into people's mouths
- › Countries that have already phased out or banned dental mercury include the Philippines, New Caledonia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Moldova
- › Countries that have banned the use of amalgam in children, pregnant women and breastfeeding women include Tanzania and Vietnam. Mauritius has banned it for children. Bangladesh has ended its use in the Armed Forces, Indonesia has stopped using it in government programs, and the Indian Armed Forces and the Indian Railway, the world's largest employer, have also ended its use
- › Please support the mission of Consumers for Dental Choice to end the use of dental mercury worldwide.

Here's some good news, for a change: The European Commission – the administrative arm of the European Union – recently proposed a ban on dental amalgam as of January 1, 2025. This includes not only the use but also the manufacture and export of dental amalgam.

In the video above, I interview Charlie Brown, founder, and executive director of Consumers for Dental Choice, about this breakthrough. As explained by Brown, the battleground now shifts to other two branches of the European Union: The Parliament and the Council. These two branches must ratify the proposal for it to become law.

In 2011, the EU leadership was dead set against acting to stop amalgam. Now, after a relentless 12-year campaign, Consumers for Dental Choice has finally made a big dent, and Brown is convinced the European campaign will succeed in turning the ban proposal into law. That said, either branch can block it, which is why we must continue supporting the European campaign.

*"We've got to convince Parliament to buy in before they have their elections in May 2024, and we've got to convince the Council. If one buys in, I think the other will buy in too,"* Brown says.

## **Keep the Momentum Going**

Once amalgam is banned in the EU, it'll be difficult for the U.S. and Canada to hold on to the barbaric and archaic practice of loading neurotoxic mercury into people's mouths.

For all these years, donors like you have supported this effort and kept Consumers for Dental Choice alive. No other group in the world has been fighting for mercury-free dentistry for as long and as hard as Consumers for Dental Choice.

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## **Many Smaller Countries Have Already Eliminated Amalgam**

Brown comments on the success of finally getting Europe to reconsider and act against this unnecessary toxin. While many smaller countries are way ahead of us and have

already ended the use of mercury dental fillings, an EU ban will protect the health of some 447 million individuals.

*"Europe is setting the pace ... [but] it's not the first, by any means," Brown says.*

*"The Philippines has ended amalgam. It's over. They had a three-year phase out [that] ended in May 2023. Countries that's hard to find on a map – New Caledonia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Moldova – we've ended amalgam there.*

*Tanzania ends amalgam this decade. They banned it for children, pregnant women and breastfeeding women. Vietnam has ended amalgam for pregnant women, children and breastfeeding women. Bangladesh has ended amalgam in the Army and armed forces.*

*Indonesia has ended amalgam in the government programs. Mauritius [ended it] for children. You have these partial victories, and you have these total victories, and now Europe is on the verge. We still have to win the parliament, we have to win in the Council, but it's on the verge of a total victory in a massive part of the world, an entire continent.*

*So, it's rolling our way, we've created the momentum, we've got a worldwide team. We were so honored to join the Health Liberty Coalition that you created, bringing together a variety of causes to join in strategies, join synergistically and work together for a better world ...*

*We're asking people to continue to join as donors because ... we must win in the other two branches in Europe. We must win the campaigns ... to push out the amalgam makers, and we're on the way to doing that ...*

*We have to raise [funds] voluntarily. We have no other way to get it. Government gives us zero cents, zero dollars. We don't sell anything. We provide a cause and a movement, and we're grateful [for all contributions]."*

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## **Largest Employer in the World Has Ended Amalgam**

The world's largest employer, the Indian Railway, has also ended amalgam, as has India's Armed Forces.

*"It's a massive operation, and they employ the dentists that take care of the employees. They have ended amalgam. The India Dental Association has basically switched sides. They said, 'To heck with the World Dental Federation. The India Dental Association endorses the phase out of amalgam.'*

*The major amalgam maker in India, and I visited him a while back to try to persuade him to move, he switched. He doesn't make amalgam. He makes the alternative. He says, 'I'm going to make more money. I'm going to make a killing doing this.' He said, 'We will beat the price of the Westerners,' which of course he will ...*

*We also have a model state in India, the state of Odisha. It has state federal system ... Our model state program is trying to end amalgam across the board in Odisha, which has more people than California. So, we're pretty optimistic about India. Its neighbor, Bangladesh, is culturally very much the same.*

*The Bengali, that is the Bangladeshi Bengalis, have ended amalgam in the army. They have a memorandum of understanding with the government to end amalgam and with the dental association signing on. And amalgam is not taught in dental schools. So, amalgam will end in Bangladesh, sooner or later. Uruguay is the same situation."*

## **US Status Update**

As for the U.S., Consumers for Dental Choice has three primary areas of focus. The first one is to identify where amalgam is still being used. There's good news here as well, because we are seeing a significant shift within the private sector. Many private dentists

recognize that there are horrible downsides to amalgam and are responding to consumer demand for safer alternatives.

Unfortunately, the bureaucracies have not changed. Millions of Americans that rely on institutional dentistry – the armed forces, inmates, those who live on Indian reservations, veterans – they're still getting mercury fillings. There's no consumer choice there. So, the bureaucracies need to change.

*"We have a very active program working with this government," Brown says. "I recently met again with a consortium of federal agencies, the Office of Assistant Secretary of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the White House Council of Environmental Quality, to make the push to implement what the Food and Drug Administration has already said, which is to end amalgam for children and pregnant women.*

*Amazingly, people that work in government agencies don't even care what the government agency on science and health has said. The FDA is saying, 'Don't give this to children and pregnant women.' It's unbelievable that they disregard the instructions from their own agency.*

*But again, they don't care about consumer choice because the consumer doesn't have any power, doesn't have any money, is forced to get a Medicaid, for example, or Indian Health and so on. We are going to change that. There's commitment in various parts of this government, and we're trying to make it work and say to these bureaucracies, 'It's over.'*

*One way to do it is to limit purchasing. I talked to the chief dental officer in India who ended amalgam in the Indian Armed Forces. They're as big as the U.S. Armed Forces. I said, 'How could you do it? In the Pentagon, it would be so elaborate to make any change.' He said, 'Easy, Charlie. I'm in charge of purchasing.' That's how we can do it ...*

*Changing government dentistry, federally-funded and state-funded programs, is No. 1. No. 2 is the green purchasing. We have green purchasing initiatives in*

*New York State and Washington State to change the purchasing of amalgam at the state level. We're doing pilot programs there."*

## **Two Largest Amalgam Producers Have Quit Making It**

Brown has also been working on getting amalgam producers to realize the harm it's doing. As a result, the largest dental products maker in the world, DentSupply, stopped making and selling amalgam in 2020.

Next, Consumers for Dental Choice started encouraging the second biggest amalgam producer, Kerr, a subsidiary of Envista Holdings Corporation, to get out of the amalgam business. Investors listened, and in the summer of 2021, one of their lawyers told Brown they'd decided to get out. The formal announcement was issued in March 2022, which read, in part:<sup>1</sup>

*"Specifically, we ceased manufacturing these products in the third quarter of 2021 and communicated this decision to our customers in November of 2021.*

*As part of this communication, we cancelled many of our customers outstanding orders for amalgams containing mercury and directed our customers to our other materials that do not contain mercury. We also engaged in a vigorous campaign to assist our customers in swapping their amalgam products containing mercury to materials that do not contain mercury."*

There are three primary holdouts left. Henry Schein, based in Long Island, New York, the largest distributor, continues to sell amalgam. Ivoclar Vivadent, based in Europe, does not sell it in Europe but sells it in the United States. Brown is pushing Ivoclar Vivadent to stop selling it altogether. Lastly, there's Southern Dental Industries, in Australia.

*"They've been particularly contemptuous of the [mercury] treaty," Brown says. "They're trying to take market share, now that DentSupply and Envista have left, but ... we're trying to stop their exports to Asia with our Asian team.*

*We have nonprofit group partners in Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Bangladesh that we work with, and who are now focused on getting Southern Dental to either get out of the amalgam business or face a challenge to their entire export regime."*

## **Nigerian and Brazilian Campaigns**

Consumers for Dental Choice also has two model states in Nigeria, Edo and Enugu, where amalgam is being phased out. There's also a national campaign, which the Nigerian Dental Association has signed onto, to phase it out. Brown comments on the advancements made in Africa:

*"We have the Dentist for Mercury-Free Africa, led by the former dean, now professor, in the oldest dental school in the Sub-Saharan, the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), and we have momentum there.*

*They just had a workshop in Abuja, and I spoke remotely, bringing in the Department of Health, the Department of Environment, international agencies, Dentists from Mercury-Free Africa ... and our NGO team. It's an extensive team.*

*We invest heavily in Nigeria. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa [in terms of] population, twice the size of the second largest, Ethiopia ... It's very exciting, and they are going to help lead Africa to mercury-free dentistry, no doubt."*

## **A Quarter Century-Long Fight**

Brown and I partnered in 2011, but he's been fighting for mercury-free dentistry far longer than that:

*"This has been a quarter century of my life. It's been the second half of my professional life. As you know, I was a former state attorney general. I'm a graduate of the best law school in the country, in my view, Yale Law School. And*

*I really think this was the challenge that needed to be met, because we had no support when we began.*

*Dentistry was just locked into mercury. We protected dentists first, by [protecting] their First Amendment right to speak, to advertise and advocate [against amalgam]. We won that. We moved on to passing state laws in the United States, then moved to suing the U.S. FDA, forcing them by federal court order to classify amalgam.*

*In 2010 came the major opportunity – a worldwide treaty on mercury. We were determined, I was determined, to get amalgam into that treaty, and I created the World Alliance for Mercury Free Dentistry in 2010.*

*In 2011, you decided to participate, and we could not have built it without you as our partner over these years. We built it. We have regional vice presidents all over the world – in Montevideo for the Latin American campaign, in Berlin for the European campaign, in Yaoundé Cameroon for the Africa campaign.*

*Dhaka, Bangladesh is the headquarters for our Asian campaign. Mauritius is the headquarters for our island states campaign. Amman, Jordan is the headquarter for our Arab States campaign. [In] each of these, we have a nonprofit group leader with other duties. They run a serious nonprofit group, but they've carved out a certain percent of their time just to coordinate the [mercury-free] campaign in those regions.*

*We've covered the planet now. We have regional centers that span the earth. I'll say to our Canadian listeners, it's important to know, Friends of the Earth Canada is our partner in Ottawa. They're doing a great job."*

The vast reach of Consumers for Dental Choice is proof positive that not a penny is laid to waste. Brown truly deserves some kind of award for the most efficient use of funds to establish an international presence.



So, I would strongly encourage each one of you, if you haven't already, to support this mission, because unlike other organizations who are committed to a cause, this one is getting very close to the end. Once amalgam has been eradicated worldwide, Consumers for Dental Choice can close shop, knowing they've safeguarded the health of billions of people, and future generations, and so can you.

**DONATE TODAY**

## **Consumer Resources**

If your current dentist is still using mercury in his or her practice – even if they also offer mercury-free options – seek out a dentist that offers only mercury-free fillings for all patients. And be sure to inform your dentist about the reason you're transferring.

If you have mercury fillings, be sure to consult with a biological dentist who is trained in the safe removal of amalgam. Toxic fumes are released during the removal, so it's crucial to have it done safely to prevent acute toxicity. As noted by Brown:

*"You really do need a dentist who fears mercury, who knows how toxic it is, and to never get them removed by a dentist who puts them in. You need a very trained dentist."*

Holistic dental organizations groups that Brown has worked with over the years, all of which provide lists of biological dentists with the proper skills to remove mercury amalgam, include the following. Consumers for Dental Choice also provides resources for holistic and biological dentistry on its [website](#).

- [The International Academy of Biological Dentistry and Medicine \(IABDM\)](#)
- [The International Academy of Oral Medicine & Toxicology \(IAOMT\)](#)

## **Sources and References**

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- <sup>1</sup> Mercury Free Dentistry March 17, 2022