

## Talking Points for Dentists to Use with Patients

**Q: “How do I know if my crown has lead in it?”**

**A:** Based on what we now know, I believe the chance of that is extremely low. As more complete information becomes available, I will share it with you. If I believe that you are at risk, I will notify you immediately, and we'll work out a plan to resolve the situation.

I can understand if you're concerned, but it's important to keep this in perspective. Millions of crowns are placed each year, and if this problem were widespread, we probably would have learned about it long ago. This news report said that of eight dental crowns that were made in a few dental labs in China, only one reportedly tested positive for lead. Of course, even one is too many—lead should not be in a dental crown or other prosthetic device.

**Q: If my crown does have lead in it, what effect will it have on my health?**

**A:** Experts are looking at whether lead in a crown could be released and absorbed by the human body and, if so, what effect that might have on health. The American Dental Association has advised us that it has brought this issue to the attention of the government agencies that are responsible for protecting the public's health so they can investigate this matter further and take action. Based on what we know now, the American Dental Association does not believe that there is widespread problem with lead in these materials since there is no FDA-approved material that contains lead. Bear in mind, this is a news report about a single dental crown. The dental lab I use [insert information about the lab you use].

**Q: Should I be tested for lead poisoning?**

**A:** Of course if you're concerned, you should ask your physician. But based on what we know so far, I'm not overly concerned about my own crown (or crowns I've placed in family members). And while I certainly want assurances that the crown was properly made, I'm not going to do anything unless and until I get more information that indicates I should do so.

**Q: Have you ever had a problem like this with any other patients in your practice?**

**A:** [You need to individualize your response]

**Q: How could lead get in a crown to begin with?**

A: Lead should not be in dental crowns. I can't speculate as to how this one particular crown ended up with lead in it. Even though the amount of lead was considered small, the bottom line is that it shouldn't have been there to begin with. That's why the American Dental Association is making sure the appropriate government agencies are aware of this case so they can take steps to investigate this matter further in order to protect the public's health. I will be sure to keep you informed of developments on this issue.

**General Talking Points:**

- As your dentist, my primary concern is for your oral health.
- I want you to know that as we speak, the American Dental Association is working to learn more.
- Here's what we do know right now. First and foremost, dental crowns, bridges and other dental prosthetics should *not* contain lead and, right now, we only know of this one instance.
- In the news report, only one of the 8 crowns that came from foreign dental labs reportedly tested high for lead--but even one is too many.
- Most crowns, bridges and other dental prosthetic devices are made in the United States. The important thing to bear in mind with any crown, bridge and other item made in a dental laboratory is not *where* the item is made, but whether the item meets international standards for safety and quality.
- The American Dental Association has contacted the FDA and other government agencies responsible for oversight and enforcement of protecting the public's health and safety. The ADA also is investigating this incident on its own, to determine as quickly as possible whether this is an isolated incident or whether it's more widespread. Either way, the ADA will make sure that both dentists and the public get that information as soon as it's available.
- The dental laboratory I use [[provide information about the dental lab you use. See the tip sheet provided on ADA.org.](#)]

**Wrap up**

I understand that news like this might cause you concern. Based on the information available right now, I do not believe this is a widespread problem, and I will certainly keep you updated on any new developments. The American Dental Association has alerted the government agencies responsible for protecting the public's health and safety so that they can take appropriate action. The ADA will keep me informed about developments on this issue and I will be sure to keep you updated.

Feb. 27, 2008