

## **SDF - Conservative Treatment Option for Both Kids and Adults**

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With all the wonderful new technology that allows for better and longer lasting teeth repairs, the main cause of the need for their repair is tooth decay which still remains rampant, in spite of more preventive awareness than ever before. Decay is the most common ailment in the U.S. and among children and adolescents is 4 to 5 times more common than asthma. The Dental Wellness Center is seeing more and more new youngsters with tooth decay whose parents are looking for solutions to deal with their children's cavities other than recommendations of general anesthesia teeth repairs and even root canals.

Segway back to the 1800's where Dr. G.V.Black (considered to be the "Father of Modern Dentistry"), who developed a technic that saved teeth with deep cavities from having to be extracted or have root canals. He discovered that by intentionally leaving some decay directly over the tooth's nerve in a deep cavity so as not to injure the nerve, and then placing a potion of Silver Nitrate solution that soaked into the decay before filling the tooth, the decay became arrested and the teeth didn't require root canal treatment or extraction afterwards – the tooth nerve became healthy and remained that way! Ask any dentist about the black tooth structure found underneath deep old fillings in healthy teeth of older adult patients. Today, many dentists routinely perform root canal treatment on a tooth with a deep cavity or refer the patient to a root canal specialist.

Great News! A new product that has a silver component similar to Dr. Black's silver nitrate called Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDL) has been found to arrest the decay process by killing the decay producing bacteria in both small and deep cavities. In children, unless the decay has caused structural damage to a tooth, treatment with this material may be all that is needed with no tooth repair. The only downside to using this material is that it leaves a dark stain in the tooth. Sometimes these stains can be masked through placing a layer of bonding material over it. The good news is that it is arresting the decay process:

- Can prevent the need for drilling and repair with small cavities
- Lessen the need for expensive repairs
- Great option for deeply decayed teeth that have not as yet caused a toothache
- Prevent the need for root canal treatment
- Prevent toothaches
- Lower dental treatment costs considerably
- By its relative ease of application, eliminate fear of dental procedures

SDL treatment protocol definitely arrests the decay process as the material literally soaks into the decay and kills oral bacteria dead! As indicated, in the case of a baby tooth that has minimal breakdown from the decay process, it may not need a filling afterwards. If deep decay is caught early enough and the pulp tissue has some vitality, the protocol will give it a chance to heal, avoiding a toothache and need for either a root canal or extraction. Its only drawback is that it leaves the affected area dark – which would be OK if it's under a filling, but would show if used on surface decay.