

If a matrix is to be used, the napkin should be adjusted before the matrix is applied. In either case the filling (cotton, spunk, etc.) should be prepared, that as little delay as possible take place before the filling is inserted. A duct compressor, comprised of a loop of spring wire having a button on each end, may be adjusted by one button resting on the outside of the cheek, while the other covers the mouth of the duct on the inside.

This lessens the flow of saliva, and is useful in prolonged operations. By the use of these simple means of keeping cavities dry, much time may be saved in short operations. If the operation must necessarily be a lengthy one, as in case of a large gold filling, it will be well to adjust the rubber dam. Some hints in connection therewith may be useful to young practitioners.

As a rule, the dam must cover more teeth than the one to be filled, or it will be in the way. For instance, if I wished to fill a cavity in an incisor, I would put the rubber over both incisors and the lateral adjoining the tooth to be filled. If, however, the cavity were in the fissures of a molar, it might only be necessary to put the rubber over that tooth alone. After deciding how many and which teeth it is desirable to cover, the next step is the making of holes in the rubber sheet. The comfort and safety with which the filling may be inserted depends not a little upon the selection of a piece of rubber the right size, and the punching or cutting of holes at the right points. The sheet selected should be large enough, and the perforations made at a point that will admit of the edges protruding a little beyond the lips when the mouth is open. This will prevent saliva from flowing over the edge of the sheet and into the cavity.

When making perforations, the size of the holes and their distance apart should correspond with the size and distance apart of the teeth to be covered. It must be noticed also whether or not the cervical wall of the cavity to be filled extends far above the gum margin. If it do, more space will be necessary between the holes than if it do not, or it will be found that when rubber has been forced up beyond the cervical wall of the cavity, it will be stretched away from the adjoining tooth. Care must be taken not to leave too much rubber between the teeth, if the cavity to be filled be an approximal, or it will fold up, obscuring the cervical wall. Before adjusting the dam, everything needed for filling the cavity should be in readiness, so that the rubber, which to many is very objectionable, may be retained in place as short a time as possible. The next step is to adjust the dam to the tooth or teeth. This is not always an easy task. If the teeth be close together, a little glycerine smeared over the holes in the rubber