

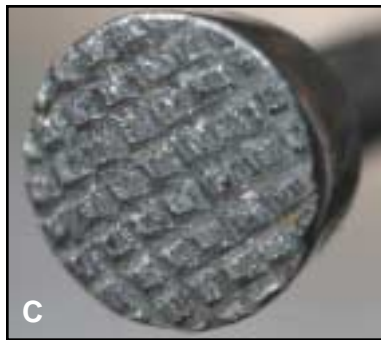
CLINICAL AID

Modified Amalgam Plugger for Etchant Application

When an acid etchant is applied with a cotton or sponge pellet, pieces of fiber sometimes snag on the etched enamel surface, and the bonding procedure has to be interrupted to remove this potential contaminant. My office has developed a technique that circumvents this problem.

A standard amalgam plugger has a smooth, rounded face for compression of the amalgam (A). Using a small crosshatch file purchased at our local hardware store (B), I scored the face of the plugger (C). This allows a droplet of etchant of consistent volume to adhere to the surface, so that the etchant can be placed exactly where it is wanted (D). In addition, carefully scraping the plugger against the enamel removes all debris and, more important, the proteinaceous pellicle that may still adhere to the tooth after the initial cleaning and rinsing. A clear, resonating scraping sound will be heard, and the smoothness of the debris-free enamel surface will be felt by the clinician (E).

After a few squirts of water and gentle air-drying, the area will be perfectly clean and ready for bonding (F). The modified amalgam plugger can be easily cleaned and sterilized, eliminating the need to set up tweezers and pellets for etchant application.



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