

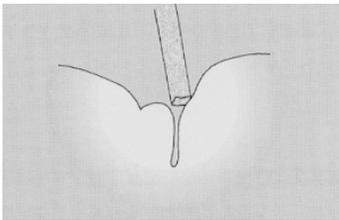
Seal Out Tooth Decay

WHAT IS A SEALANT?

A sealant is a clear or shaded plastic material that is applied to the chewing surfaces of back teeth. This is where decay usually starts.

WHAT DOES A SEALANT DO?

A sealant prevents tooth decay. It covers the pits and grooves of chewing surfaces and seals out decay-causing food and germs.



Side view of narrow groove on top of tooth compared to single toothbrush bristle.

WHEN SHOULD SEALANTS BE PLACED?

Sealants are most useful if they are placed on permanent molars as soon as the teeth grow into the mouth.

The first permanent molars grow in between the ages of 5 and 7. The second permanent molars grow in between the ages of 11 and 14.

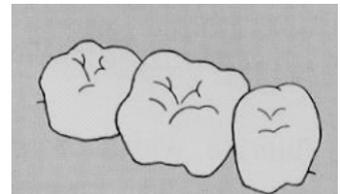
HOW IS A SEALANT PLACED?

A sealant is placed by a licensed oral health professional. The procedure is simple and painless. It takes only a few minutes. The tooth is cleaned and treated with a solution that allows the sealant to stick to the tooth. Sealants are applied as a liquid and quickly harden to form a shield over the tooth.

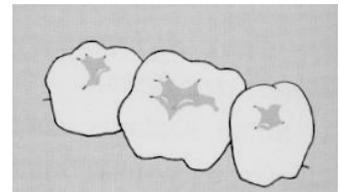
WHAT ABOUT FLUORIDE?

Fluoride makes teeth more resistant to decay and can repair tiny areas of early decay before they become big cavities. The most common sources of fluoride are toothpaste and fluoridated water. Sealants and fluoride are recommended for the best protection against tooth decay.

Sealants +
Fluoride =
Best Protection
Against Cavities



Chewing surface of teeth before sealant is applied



Chewing surface of teeth after sealant is applied

Source: Gregory F. George, *Look Mom...No Cavities!*

Help Your Children be Cavity Free

Children need to have their teeth and gums cleaned daily to prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Parents need to help children learn oral hygiene skills.

BRUSHING BASICS

- A parent should supervise brushing for children under age 8.
- Brush twice a day – in the morning and at bedtime.
- A thorough brushing takes 2-3 minutes.
- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- If you are not sure if your child is at risk for tooth decay, ask an oral health professional.
- Use a pea-size portion of fluoride toothpaste for children over age 3. The toothpaste should be approved by the Canadian Dental Association.

- Children should spit out toothpaste. Swallowing toothpaste should be discouraged.
- Replace toothbrushes every three months or if your child has just recovered from an illness.

FLOSSING FACTS

- Flossing helps to prevent gum disease and cavities from starting between teeth.
- Flossing cleans between teeth and under the gums where the toothbrush cannot reach.
- A child will need help flossing until around age 9. By this time the child should be able to floss on his/her own.

BEAT SWEETS

- Encourage healthy snacks.
- Reduce how often snacks are offered, especially sticky foods that cling to teeth.
- Eat sweets at the end of a meal. Increased saliva flow during meals helps reduce the effects of harmful acids.
- Choose milk or water more often than sugary drinks.

DENTAL VISITS

- Visit the dentist regularly – at least once a year.

Brush twice a day - In the morning and at bedtime - Children need help brushing until about the age of 8.

Outside



Angle brush, place half on teeth, half on gums, vibrate side to side

Inside



Brush the inside surfaces of the front and the back teeth

Chewing Surfaces



Vibrate back and forth

Floss once a day - Children need help flossing until about the age of 9.



Wrap floss around middle fingers (about ½ meter or half an arm's length)



Gently guide floss between teeth



Move floss up and down, sliding under gumline on both adjacent teeth