

- **Reduce your child's risk for decay in the hard-to-clean pits and fissures**
- **Look as natural as your unsealed teeth**
- **One simple step to help your child keep their teeth for a lifetime**



### **The benefits of early prevention can last a lifetime.**

A sealant is a clear or tinted plastic protective coating that is painted onto the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (molars and premolars), the areas where most cavities form first. Molars and premolars have grooves and crevices (which dentists call pits and fissures). Food can get stuck in these crevices. Some crevices are so deep that the bristles of a toothbrush can't reach into them. Pits and fissures provide the perfect environment for acidic bacteria to grow and cause cavities.

Sealants help to prevent this from happening. They cover the grooves and crevices so that food cannot get into them. Sealants most commonly are applied to children's teeth to help prevent cavities.

Not only are sealants very effective, they cost a lot less than filling cavities. Most dentists recommend that sealants be applied to each permanent molar as soon as possible. This can be when the tooth is only partially erupted into the mouth. However, it can be done only if the tooth can be kept dry and free of saliva during the application process.

If your child is at high risk of cavities, your dentist may decide to seal your child's premolars, or

bicuspid, as well. The premolars are the teeth directly in front of the molars. Dentists normally don't suggest sealants for primary (baby) teeth. However, sealants can be beneficial for children who have a lot of cavities or are at high risk of dental disease. Sealants are very effective when they are maintained and touched-up routinely.

Sealants are sometimes used in adults who are at increased risk of developing cavities. Your dentist can recommend whether this procedure is appropriate for you. Studies show that sealants can last a long time, sometimes as long as 15 years. But they are plastic and don't last forever. Your child's dentist will check the sealants during your child's routine checkups. If necessary, the sealants can be replaced or touched-up.

Remember, sealants work well, but they can't keep your child cavity-free without some help as other surfaces of the teeth are still susceptible to decay. Good oral care at home is still very important. It's also important for adults who have received sealants to continue to practice good oral hygiene by brushing twice a day, flossing at least once a day, and visiting a dentist regularly. Help your child to:

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Brush twice a day with a pea-size amount of toothpaste, and floss between teeth that touch each other.

- Get the right amount of fluoride, either by drinking fluoridated water or taking fluoride drops or pills.

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See a dentist regularly.

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Use xylitol products to reduce acidic bacteria.

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Use neutralising oral care products to keep the pH in the mouth in the healthy zone.

