

Protecting Your Teeth With Sealants



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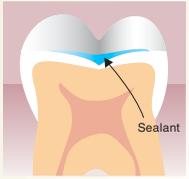
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Healthy 
Mouths *for life*

What is a Dental Sealant?



A dental sealant is a plastic resin material that a dentist places into the grooves of the chewing surface of the tooth to help prevent the formation of cavities (tooth decay).

Why are Sealants Important?

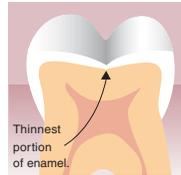
Brushing your teeth twice a day helps remove plaque (an acid film that forms on your teeth and causes cavities), but some teeth are harder to clean than others. These are usually your back teeth. Molar teeth have grooves called “pits and fissures” and it is in these grooves that the plaque is not always cleaned off during brushing. The longer plaque remains on a tooth, the more likely it is to create a cavity.

To combat plaque formation, a sealant can be applied to the back molars. The plastic sealant material forms a bond over the tooth, almost like a smooth coating, filling all of the grooves. Because the grooves have now been filled in with this smooth sealant material, it is now difficult for plaque to accumulate and form cavities. When properly applied, dental sealants have proved to be highly effective in preventing pit and fissure cavities.

How is a Sealant Applied?

Your dentist or dental hygienist will first make sure your tooth is clean. Then the tooth’s surface will be prepared using a process called etching which ensures that the sealant will bond to it. After the tooth dries, the liquid sealant is painted or dabbed into the grooves of the tooth. The dentist or hygienist will then shine a special light on the tooth, which causes the sealant to harden immediately.

Who Should Get Sealants?



If you have had a cavity or have molars with deep grooves, then you may be at a higher risk for future decay. Check with your dentist to see if sealants may be right for you. Your dentist will perform a check-up that will help determine if a tooth is at risk for developing decay, making you a candidate for sealants.