

Sealants

What are Sealants?

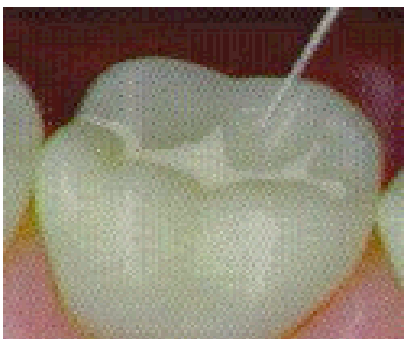
Dental decay (cavity) is still the most prevalent chronic disease among children. Sealants are one of the best ways to protect your child's teeth against tooth decay. A sealant is a plastic material or resin that is usually applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth, premolars and molars. This plastic resin bonds to the grooves (pits and fissures) of the tooth's chewing surface. The sealant acts as a barrier protecting the tooth's enamel from plaque and acid attack from bacteria. The grooves of the teeth are so small that a toothbrush bristle cannot reach all the way into the grooves for proper cleansing. A sealant will "seal" out plaque, food and acid from these vulnerable areas and help prevent decay!

Who should have sealants?

Sealants are usually placed in children upon the eruption of their first and second molars. If sealants were around prior to the 1990's, many of the crowns, fillings and root canals could have been prevented. Sealants are sometimes placed on deciduous (baby) teeth when indicated. Adults can also benefit from sealants. The American Dental Association, Chicago Dental Society, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and US Public Health Service all acknowledge and recommend the routine use of sealants for prevention of decay.

How are sealants applied?

Sealants are easy and painless to apply. No anesthetic is needed and the procedure takes only a few minutes. The tooth is cleaned and the sealant is painted on the tooth. A curing light hardens the sealant and bonds it to the tooth. In our office 3M ESPE Clinpro Sealant is used. Clinpro is the highest rated sealant in clinical testing and has a unique patented color change feature. It is pink when applied to assure complete coverage and changes to white upon curing.



How long do sealants last?

Sealants can last indefinitely, however an average life span is 8 years. Sealants hold up well under normal chewing but sticky foods, as with any restoration, should be avoided. During regular dental visits, the condition of the sealants will be checked. As long as the sealant is intact, the tooth structure is protected from decay. Sealants will be reapplied when necessary.