

# Dental Sealants Save Teeth!

## What are dental sealants?

- Dental sealants are tooth-colored coatings that fill in the grooves of back teeth.
- Most tooth decay in children occurs in the molar teeth.
- Sealants keep out food and germs that cause cavities.

## Which teeth should be sealed?

The chewing surfaces of back teeth (molars) should be sealed. These are the teeth that get the most cavities.

## How are sealants put on the back teeth?

- Teeth that need dental sealants are cleaned with a toothbrush.
- The sealant material is painted on the tooth and quickly hardens.
- Placing sealants is painless and takes only a few minutes.

## Can tooth decay occur beneath sealants?

Dental sealants prevent decay-causing germs from getting food they need to live. As a result, decay is not likely to progress, even if some germs are trapped under the sealant.

## Before Dental Sealant



Food and bacteria become trapped in grooves and pits.

## After Dental Sealant



Grooves and pits are sealed and protected from food and bacteria.

## HEALTHY TEETH HELP CHILDREN:

- Do better in school
- Stay healthier and have less sick days
- Have shiny smiles, which make friends



**How long  
will  
sealants  
last?**

Research shows that dental sealants can last for many years, and will protect your child's teeth through their most cavity prone years. Once sealants are placed on the chewing surfaces of back teeth, they will be checked once again during your dental visits, and more sealant will be applied if it is missing.

**Will  
sealants  
make the  
teeth feel  
different?**

A dental sealant may be slightly noticeable until normal chewing wears it into place. Since sealants are very thin and only fill the pits and fissures, they will not cause a change in the bite.

## HOW CAN TOOTH DECAY BE PREVENTED?

- 1 Brush and floss daily.
- 2 Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste.
- 3 Have dental sealants applied.
- 4 Eat a well balanced diet and avoid sugary foods.
- 5 Visit the dentist regularly.

## HOW CAN YOU GET DENTAL SEALANTS?

Ask your dentist or your school-based dental health program about getting dental sealants. For additional information on dental sealants, check out SEAL CT! at [www.ct.gov/dph/oralhealth](http://www.ct.gov/dph/oralhealth)

Your local contact  
for dental sealants:

Information adapted from The Michigan Oral Health Program, SEAL! Michigan, and Michigan Department of Health & Human Services "Sealants Save Teeth!", Michigan Department of Community Health "smile! Michigan Dental Sealant Program", and Arizona Department of Health Services "Arizona School-based Sealant Program." This project is/was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under T12HP28885 Oral Health Workforce Grant for \$1,200,000. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."

