



## Dental Sealants Fact Sheet

OCTOBER 2017

### The Challenge...

Cavities (dental caries) are a common, chronic, infectious disease. They are caused when the bacteria found in the mouth breaks down food, producing an acid that breaks down the tooth, forming tooth decay.<sup>1</sup> If left untreated, tooth decay can lead to pain, infection and even tooth loss. To prevent decay in the tooth grooves, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all children receive age-appropriate dental sealants.

### What you need to know...

- The chewing surfaces of back teeth (molars) are where most dental cavities form, and these areas should have dental sealants applied. Dental sealants prevent decay-causing germs from developing dental decay in the deep grooves where the toothbrush cannot clean well.
- Dental sealants are tooth-colored coatings that fill in these pits and grooves, providing a protective shield. Dental sealants are safe, pain-free, quick to apply, 90% effective, and low in cost. They are non-invasive and do not require any local anesthesia.<sup>2</sup>
- Dental sealants can last for many years and will protect teeth through the most cavity-prone years. Once sealants are applied, they will be checked during your regular dental visits and more sealant will be applied if it is missing.

### Ways You Can Help...

- Children should get dental sealants on their permanent first and second molars as soon as the teeth erupt enough to place the sealant - before tooth decay forms.
- Other teeth with deep pits and grooves might also benefit from dental sealant placement.

### How sealants are applied...

- Teeth that will be sealed are thoroughly cleaned.
- Each tooth is dried, and area around the tooth is isolated with cotton rolls.
- A blue solution is applied to the tooth to create microscopic pores which helps the sealant adhere to the tooth.
- Tooth is thoroughly rinsed and dried again.
- The dental sealant is painted in the grooves and pits of the tooth, and a special light is used to harden the material.



Without  
dental sealant



With  
dental sealant

### Footnotes:

1. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/disease/dental\\_caries.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/disease/dental_caries.html)
2. <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/ToothDecay/SealOutToothDecay.htm#whoShouldGet>

**For more information, contact Office of Oral Health**

Phone: 860-509-8251

Email: [dph.officeoforalhealth@ct.gov](mailto:dph.officeoforalhealth@ct.gov)