

MICHIGAN DENTAL SEALANT FACT SHEET



What are Dental Sealants?

Sealants are clear or white in color and protect the grooved and pitted surfaces of the teeth, especially the chewing surfaces of back teeth where most cavities in children are found. Sealants are put on permanent teeth to help keep them cavity free.

How do Sealants Work?

Even if your child brushes and flosses carefully, it is very hard—sometimes impossible—to clean the tiny grooves and pits on certain teeth. Food and germs build up in these grooves, making your child get cavities easier. Sealants “seal out” food and germs helping your child to stop getting cavities.

How Long Do Sealants Last?

Research shows that sealants can last for many years if the teeth are taken care of. Your child’s teeth will be protected through the most decay prone years. The sealants will last longer if your child takes good care of the teeth and avoids biting hard objects. The sealants will be checked after they are placed and more sealant applied if it is missing.

How Are Sealants Put on the Teeth?

The placement of a sealant is quick and comfortable. The tooth is cleaned, a special liquid is put on the tooth to get it ready, it is dried, and then the sealant flows into the grooves. It is hardened with a special light. Your child can eat right after the sealant is placed.

How Much Does It Cost?

There is NO COST to you for your child to have sealants in the SEAL! MICHIGAN Sealant Program if your school participates. The cost has been paid by a grant and by billing your insurance. Please advise your dentist that you have had dental sealants placed.

Which Teeth Should be Sealed?

The teeth most likely to get decay are the ones with grooves and fissures so the most important teeth to seal are the 1st and 2nd permanent molars.

If My Child has Sealants, Are Brushing and Flossing Still Important?

Yes, for sure. Sealants are only one part of the plan to keep your child from getting cavities. Brushing, flossing, eating healthy foods with limited snacking and regular check ups at your dentist will give your child a healthy smile.

Have Sealants Been Tested To Be Safe and Proven to Work?

Yes, tens of thousands of children across the United States and in other countries have had their teeth successfully sealed. Studies show sealants to be safe, effective, easy to apply and less costly compared to fillings. This school sealant program has been approved by the American Dental Association, Center For Disease Control and U.S. Surgeon General.

Will Sealants Replace Fluoride?

No, fluorides such as those used in fluoridated water, fluoride toothpaste, and fluoride mouthrinses help prevent decay on the smooth sides of the teeth. However, fluorides help the teeth less on the rough, pitted chewing surfaces of the back teeth where food particles and decay-producing bacteria are trapped. Sealants, however, are only effective on the uneven chewing surfaces.

For More Information About Dental Sealants Contact:
Michigan Department of Community Health (517-335-9526 or e-mail:
oralhealth@michigan.gov)

This Fact Sheet is adapted from The American Academy of Pediatrics Sealant Fact Sheet

For more information contact:

**Michigan Department of Community Health
109 W. Michigan, Washington Square Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913
Phone 517-335-9526
Fax: 517-335-8697
E-mail: oralhealth@michigan.gov**

*Michigan Department
of Community Health*



**Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
Janet Olszewski, Director**

Revisions to this form can only be done with the approval of MDCH.