

# SEAL! MICHIGAN

## Dental Sealant Information

**What are dental sealants?** Sealants are clear or white in color\* and they protect the grooved and pitted surfaces of the teeth, especially the chewing surfaces of the back molar teeth. The molar teeth are where most cavities in children are found.

\*See photo of back molar tooth with a dental sealant →



**How do dental sealants work?** Even if your child brushes and flosses daily, it is very hard - sometimes impossible - to clean the tiny grooves and pits on back molar teeth. Food and germs build up in the grooves that are found on molar teeth, making it easier to get cavities. Sealants “seal out” food and germs and this helps to prevent cavities.

**How long do dental sealants last?** Research shows that dental 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 - childhood. The dental sealants will last longer if your child takes good care of their teeth and avoids biting hard objects.

**How are dental sealants put on the teeth?** The placement of a dental sealant is quick and comfortable. The tooth is cleaned, a special liquid is placed on the tooth to get it ready to hold the sealant, the tooth is dried, and then the sealant simply flows into the grooves. The dental sealant is dried by a special dental light. Your child can eat and drink right after the dental sealant is placed - no waiting!

**How much do dental sealants cost?** NO costs to you for your child to have dental sealants if your child’s school participates with the SEAL! Michigan Dental Sealant Program. The costs are paid for by grant funding and by billing insurance companies. If you do not have dental insurance, your child will still receive the dental sealant(s) for free!

***Which teeth should have dental sealants?*** The teeth which are most likely to get cavities are the back molar teeth. It is important to have dental sealant placed on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> molars. Children usually get their 1<sup>st</sup> molars around age 6, and their second molars around age 12.

***Will my child still need to brush and floss if they have dental sealants?*** Yes. Daily brushing and flossing is still important. It is also important to eat healthy foods and visit the dentist to keep your child's teeth healthy.



***Are dental sealants safe and proven to work?*** Yes. Dental sealants have been placed for decades across the United States and in other countries. Studies show that dental sealants are safe, effective, and less costly than a dental filling. The American Dental Association, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Surgeon General all approve dental sealants.

***Will dental sealants replace fluoride?*** No. Fluoride is still necessary to keep teeth strong. Some sources of fluoride that your child may receive may come from his/her drinking water, fluoride toothpaste, and they may receive a fluoride treatment from their dental hygienist at the dentist office.

***For more information on dental sealants and oral health, please contact:***

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\* This fact sheet has been adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics Sealant Fact Sheet. Revisions to this form must be approved by the Michigan Department of Community Health