

DENTAL SEALANTS

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT



WHAT IS A DENTAL SEALANT?

A sealant is a plastic material that is usually applied to the pits and grooves of teeth to prevent decay. The sealant acts as a barrier, protecting enamel from plaque and acids.

IS SEALANT APPLICATION A COMPLICATED PROCEDURE?

The procedure can easily be performed without anesthetic and is similar to a tooth polishing. Sealants are usually placed on teeth that have deep fissures a toothbrush cannot reach. They are not placed on teeth that already have obvious decay or a previous restoration.

Once the teeth have been selected, it's an easy process for your dentist or certified dental assistant to apply the sealant. The tooth is conditioned, rinsed, dried, and the sealant painted onto the tooth. A bright curing light is then used to help the sealant harden.

WHAT DO SEALANTS LOOK LIKE?

The material is tooth colored and flows into the grooves and pits of the teeth. It is very natural looking and sometimes difficult to even tell if the tooth has a sealant.

HOW LONG DO SEALANTS LAST?

Sealants hold up well under the force of normal chewing and usually last several years before a reapplication is needed. During your regular dental visits, your dentist will check the condition of the sealants and reapply them when necessary.

HOW CAN I GET SEALANTS ON MY TEETH?

The Student Emergency Dental Service, Dental Hygiene Program, or your own dentist's office can apply sealants to your teeth after first doing a screening to determine eligibility.

DO SEALANTS HELP SAVE MONEY?

Prevention is better than treatment. Savings in both dollars and discomfort can be gained by application of sealants rather than allowing decay to develop requiring the tooth to be restored.