

Sealants: Stop Cavities Before They Begin

Imagine you could protect your smile and preserve good oral health. Would you do it? In all likelihood the answer is yes and, with sealants, you can.

Few oral issues can be fully preempted or prevented. After all, genetics and other factors can play a role in whether or not you develop cavities or more serious dental complications. But with sealants, you can prevent cavities for up to a decade before they ever have a chance to start.

What Are Sealants?

Sealants are thin, plastic coatings that are painted on the chewing surfaces of teeth, particularly premolars and molars, to prevent tooth decay. By bonding to the depressions and grooves of teeth where most cavities begin, they can prevent tooth decay in a way that regular brushing, flossing, and rinsing can't.

Most often, sealants are used on children between the ages of 6 and 14 because this is when they are most vulnerable to cavities. Sealants can also be used on adults who don't have current decay or fillings in their molars and on babies with deep depressions and grooves in teeth to preserve them as placeholders for adult teeth. Of course, sealants must be made age-appropriate and tailored to each patient's unique needs.

Applying Sealants is Quick and Painless for Most

The best part about sealants is that the application process is quick and painless. In fact, there are just four simple steps involved in the entire process:

- **Cleaning** – Prior to applying sealants, your dentist will clean each tooth that is being sealed to ensure the bond is as strong as possible.
- **Preparation** – Once your teeth are clean, they will be dried and surrounded by cotton or another absorbent material to prevent saliva from getting the tooth wet again. An acid solution will also be applied to enhance the bond between the sealants and your teeth.



- **Rising and Drying** – After the acid solution has been applied, just one more rinse and dry is required before the actual application.
- **Application of the Sealants** – After all the preparation is complete, the sealants will be applied. In some cases, your dentist will use a special curing light to help sealants to harden more quickly.

Sealants Can Stand the Test of Time for Most

Few dental solutions are permanent and sealants are no different. However, they can provide up to 10 years of protection, which is great for babies, young children, and adults.

Regular dental visits are the best way to prolong the effectiveness of your treatment. Your dentist can check your sealants for chipping or wearing and replace them if necessary. By replacing them soon after they begin to wear down, you can enjoy continued protection from cavities.

With Sealants, You Can Keep Your Smile Both Beautiful and Functional

Sealants are a simple solution to prevent cavities and protect some of the most functional teeth in your mouth. They can be a worthwhile investment for you and/or your children to keep smiles looking great for years to come.

Sources:

Dental Health: Sealants. (2013, April 14). Retrieved June 2, 2015 from <http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/dental-sealants>