

Pediatric Dentistry of the North Shore

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Q: What are sealants?

A: Sealants protect the surfaces of teeth with grooves and pits, especially the chewing surfaces of back teeth where most cavities in children are found. They do not protect the sides of the teeth.

Q: How do sealants work?

A: Even if your child brushes and flosses carefully, it is difficult, sometimes impossible, to clean the tiny grooves and pits on certain teeth. Food and bacteria build up in these depressions, placing your child in danger of tooth decay. Sealants "seal out" food and plaque, thus reducing the risk of decay.

Q: How long will sealants stay?

A: Sealants have been used since the 1970s. Research shows that sealants can last for many years, for an average of 5 to 10 years. Lost or damaged sealants can easily be replaced or repaired.

Q: What is the treatment like?

A: The application of a sealant is quick and comfortable and takes only one visit. The tooth is conditioned and the sealant is applied, set with a blue light. The patient may eat and drink immediately after the appointment.

Q: Are sealants paid for by insurance?

A: Most dental insurance plans allow for payment, usually until age fourteen. Check with your insurance representative to find out if your coverage includes sealants. The code number for sealants is D1351.

Q: Which teeth should be sealed?

A: The teeth most at risk of decay, and therefore most in need of sealants, are the six-year and twelve-year molars. However, any tooth with grooves or pits may benefit from the protection of sealants.

Q: Are brushing and flossing still important with sealants on the teeth?

A: Absolutely! Sealants are only one step in the plan to keep your child cavity-free for a lifetime. Brushing, flossing and regular dental visits are still essential to a bright, healthy smile.