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SEALANT INFORMATION

What is a sealant?

Sealants are an optional preventative procedure that can be used to reduce the risk of cavity development. Cavities on the chewing surfaces (pits and fissures) of the teeth account for approximately 80 to 90 percent of cavities in permanent teeth and 44 percent of primary teeth. The sealant is a coating that is applied on these pits and fissures of teeth to reduce the risk of a cavity from developing. Sealants cannot be placed in between teeth.

When are sealants recommended?

Sealants are most often recommended on the 1st and 2nd molars, as these teeth tend to be the most prone to cavities. The 1st molars usually grow in around 6 years of age and the 2nd molars usually around 12 years of age. In some cases, other teeth the doctor considers to be more susceptible to cavities may benefit from sealants as well.

How are sealants applied?

They are simple to place, painless, and no local anesthetic is required. The sealant is gently placed on the tooth with a special instrument and sets almost immediately with a curing light. You can eat and drink immediately after the sealants are placed.

Are the teeth with sealants 100% protected from decay?

Sealants offer an additional preventive measure against cavities on the teeth in which they're placed. Even with the added protection, sometimes cavities still develop due to changes in patient habits, oral bacteria, or loss in adherence of the sealant. Placing a sealant will not guarantee a cavity will never develop but can greatly reduce the risk of a cavity forming.

How long do sealants last?

Sealants will wear down due to normal chewing function. In general, a sealant tends to last about 3 years but many often last longer. The sealants are carefully evaluated at each of your child's visits and will be maintained for at least 4 years during their routine visits. After 3 years it may be necessary to place a new sealant if your child's teeth will still benefit from the additional protection.

Is the sealant material safe?

Dental sealant is a resin that is similar to tooth colored filling material. The sealant material we use at our practice does not contain BPA.

Are there special instructions for after the sealants are placed?

You can eat and drink immediately after the sealants are placed. However, to maximize the retention of the sealants, we recommend the patient avoid chewing on excessively hard substances such as ice, hard candies, or popcorn kernels. These may contribute to loss of the sealant material and aren't a great idea to chew on even without sealants.

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