

## WHAT ARE PIT & FISSURE SEALANTS?

Pit and fissure sealants are one of the most effective means of preventing dental decay. We are happy to offer this service to our patients. The dental profession is continually working to prevent dental decay. Utilizing fluorides, proper tooth brushing and flossing techniques, regular dental checkups, and sealants, Americans have seen a dramatic reduction in dental decay.

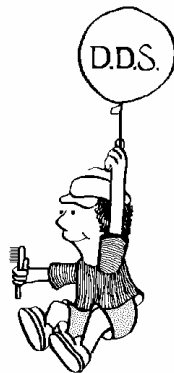
A pit and fissure sealant is a plastic-like material. The sealants are placed into the biting surfaces of the back teeth. These teeth often have very deep grooves in them that are extremely difficult to keep clean. We have found that children often get cavities in these areas of their teeth soon after they come into the mouth. Sealants serve to seal these deep grooves and thereby help to prevent dental decay.

Teeth have 5 surfaces. Sealants protect the chewing surface only. Of course, brushing, flossing and fluorides are necessary to prevent decay on the remaining surfaces.

PLACEMENT...The surface of the tooth is carefully cleaned and treated. The sealant is then "bonded" to the chewing surface. The tooth must be kept completely dry to insure successful bonding. If a child is very active, has trouble breathing through their nose, or gags easily, the sealants may need to be postponed until the child can tolerate their placement.

WHEN DO WE PLACE SEALANTS?...We recommend sealing the 1st permanent molars once they come into the mouth (at age 6 or 7). The remaining back teeth are usually all present (except the wisdom teeth) by age 14. These can be sealed as a group at that time.

HOW LONG WILL THE SEALANT LAST?...Clinical tests have shown better than a 70% success rate over a three year test period (i.e. They help prevent 7 out of 10 biting surface cavities). As stated, sealants are a plastic material. These do wear with time, just as teeth and fillings wear. Sealants may require repair on occasion. Ice & hard candy chewing may cause the sealants to crack and is discouraged. We will maintain your child's sealants for one year at no additional cost.



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