

Dental Sealants: Protecting Kids Teeth against Cavities

Most cavities in children occur in the grooves of the chewing surfaces of the back of teeth. These grooves are known as “pit and fissures.” These areas are natural hiding places for food and decay causing bacteria. Young children have difficulty properly tooth brushing these areas.

Fluorides in water, toothpaste and mouth rinses have greatly reduced tooth decay, but the effects of fluoride are most beneficial to smooth surfaces of the tooth but are somewhat less effective on the tooth surfaces with pits and fissures. Those tooth surfaces with deep fissures may not be adequately cleaned with a toothbrush, and can benefit from the additional decay preventing effects of dental sealants.

What is a dental sealant?

A dental sealant is a plastic coating which bonds to the enamel of the teeth, sealing the pits and fissures, and preventing penetration of decay causing bacteria. Placement of a sealant is less expensive than filling a tooth, and since no tooth structure is removed a local anesthetic and drill are not required.

According to the 2001 Kentucky Children’s Oral Health Profiles, 29.1 % of Kentucky kids screened had preventive dental sealants. Be sure to speak to your dentist or dental hygienist about dental sealants for your family.



Source:

- 2001 Kentucky Children’s Oral Health Survey, College of Dentistry, University of Kentucky

Prepared by:

Sharlee Shirley Burch, RDH, MPH
 UK College of Dentistry, Extension Health Specialist
 UK Cooperative Extension HEEL Program
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