

A circular inset image on the left side of the page shows a young girl with dark hair and bangs, smiling warmly. She is resting her chin on her arms, which are crossed on a dark surface. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a glass of water and some greenery.

Dental Sealants Protect Your Child from Tooth Decay

Dental sealants protect a child's teeth from cavities and are recommended to prevent tooth decay by the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

A sealant is a thin plastic coating that is applied to the chewing surface of molars, or back teeth. They fill the small grooves and pits of teeth where bacteria are more likely to stick and cause cavities. By protecting tooth enamel, sealants can prevent bacteria from multiplying and causing tooth decay. According to research, sealants can even prevent future cavities by stopping decay in its early stages.

When to get sealants

A child's first molars usually appear at age 5 to 7, and the second permanent molars will appear between 11 and 14 years of age. Sealants applied when your child's second set, or permanent set of molars, erupt can have the most benefits and help prevent decay.

What to expect at the dentist's office

Sealants are a quick, easy and painless procedure and can last up to 10 years. Your child can eat and resume normal activities immediately afterward. Your child's dentist will check the placement of sealants at regular visits and reapply if necessary.

Why sealants make sense

Sealants are safe and effective. Sealants have been shown to reduce the risk of cavities in the teeth they cover. A single cavity can cost more than \$2,000 throughout an individual's lifetime as fillings may need to be replaced more than once and eventually be replaced by a crown. Protecting your child's teeth with sealants can help ensure they have a healthy smile throughout their entire lifetime.

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