

## Are Dental Sealants safe?

Yes, tens of thousands of children across the United States and in other countries have had their teeth successfully sealed.

# Dental Sealant Program

## This program is endorsed by:

- American Dental Association
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Michigan Department of Community Health
- United States Surgeon General

## How can I learn more about Dental Sealants?

To learn more about dental sealants talk to your dentist, or contact your local health department.

## How can tooth decay be prevented?

- 1** Brush and floss daily.
- 2** Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste.
- 3** Have dental sealants applied.
- 4** Eat a well balanced diet and avoid sugary foods and drinks.
- 5** Visit the dentist regularly.

## Or You May Contact:

Oral Health Program, State of Michigan  
Michigan Department of Community Health  
Washington Square Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lansing, MI 48913

Call: 517-335-9526

E-mail: [oralhealth@michigan.gov](mailto:oralhealth@michigan.gov)

Information adapted from American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

Funding: Title V Maternal and Child Health Block grant, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Any revisions to this form must be approved by MDCH.

June, 2007



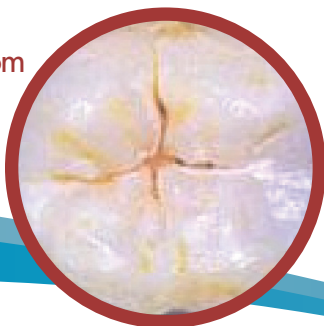
Developing Healthy Smiles

Most cavities start on back teeth in the small depressions and narrow grooves called pits and fissures. Germs can hide in the pits and fissures increasing the risk of cavities. Teeth are at risk for cavities and need protection. Dental sealants can provide this protection.

### What are Dental Sealants?

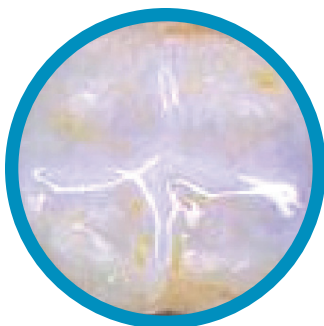
A dental sealant is a white plastic material painted on the chewing surfaces of permanent molars. The sealant bonds to the tooth and forms a thin protective cover that keeps plaque and food out (germs), reducing the risk of tooth decay.

Without Sealant  
**Unprotected** from  
Cavity Causing  
Germs



*Pits and Fissures*

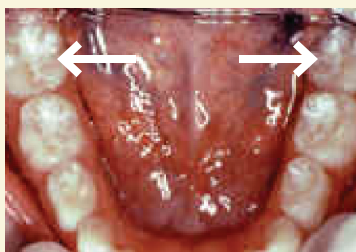
With Sealant  
**Protected** from  
Cavity Causing  
Germs



*Sealant*

### How are Dental Sealants applied?

The placement of a sealant is quick and comfortable. The tooth is cleaned, a special liquid is put on the tooth to get it ready, it is dried, and then the sealant flows into the grooves. It is hardened with a special light. Your child can eat right after the sealant is placed.



### Which teeth should be sealed?

The teeth most likely to get decay are the ones with grooves and fissures so the most important teeth to seal are the permanent molars. Children in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade usually have four permanent teeth to be sealed, two on the top and two on the bottom in the very back. 6<sup>th</sup> graders may have four additional teeth to be sealed.



### Can tooth decay occur beneath sealants?

Sealants prevent decay-causing germs from getting food they need to live. As a result, decay is not likely to progress, even if some germs are trapped under the sealant.

### How long do sealants last?

Research shows that sealants can last for many years if the teeth are taken care of. Your child's teeth will be protected through the most decay prone years. The sealants will last longer if your child takes good care of the teeth and avoids biting hard objects. The sealants will be checked once again in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or 7<sup>th</sup> grade and more sealant applied if it is missing.

### Will sealants make the teeth feel different?

A dental sealant may be slightly noticeable until normal chewing wears it into place. Since sealants are very thin and only fill the pits and fissures, they will not cause a change in the bite.

### Are sealants expensive?

There is NO COST to you for your child to have sealants in the SEAL! MICHIGAN Dental Sealant Program if your school is a participant. Medicaid, Healthy Kids or other dental insurance may be billed for the services provided.