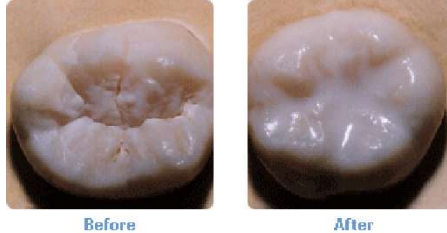


PROTECTIVE PIT AND FISSURE SEALANTS



What are sealants?

A sealant is a resin material that is placed on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (premolars and molars). The back teeth have pits and fissures which are narrow grooves formed during development. These pits and fissures are difficult to keep clean since the toothbrush bristles cannot reach down into them. Sealants form a thin covering that can prevent food and bacteria from sticking to the grooves, thus decreasing the chance of developing cavities. Recent studies have shown that there is up to a 58% reduction in cavities after sealant placement. Although sealants will reduce the risk of cavities on the chewing surface, they cannot prevent cavities in between the teeth (this can be accomplished through flossing).

How are sealants placed?

Sealant placement is simple and does not require use of any anesthetic. The tooth is first cleaned with a rotary brush to ensure removal of food and bacteria in the grooves. Then, a mild acidic solution is placed on the tooth to roughen the surface and enhance retention of the sealant. Lastly, the sealant is painted on the surface and a special light is used to help it harden.

How long do sealants last?

Sealants may last several years after placement. It is important to remember that sealants need to be maintained and will be checked during regular dental visits. Sealants can be damaged by bruxism (grinding teeth together) or chewing on hard foods such as ice and hard candy. Sealant re-application will be necessary at some time in the life cycle of the tooth.

Can you place sealants on baby teeth?

The grooves on baby teeth are not as pronounced as permanent teeth and may not need to be sealed. In addition, young children may not be able to cooperate for sealant placement. If your child has baby teeth that have deeper pits and fissures that are prone to cavities, they may be a candidate for sealants.

Should you have any questions, please call us: 905-709-3888