



# How Do Dentists Seal Teeth?

## Protect your child's teeth from tooth decay with sealants

### Groovy Teeth

Premolars and molars are the teeth responsible for chewing and grinding food. In general, the premolars and first and second molars should be fully erupted by age thirteen. The last set of molars are known as wisdom teeth, which typically come in between age 17 and 21. Wisdom teeth often get extracted because there's gum inflammation, sensitivity, infection, abnormal positioning, or are impacted under the gum. Aside from their function in breaking down food, premolar and molar teeth play a vital role in speech.

The chewing surface of premolars and molars is a landscape of mountains and valleys. The valleys, pits, and grooves, are the size of a pencil tip, which means they are harder to clean and reach with a toothbrush. This creates the perfect environment for plaque buildup and for decay to develop. To keep the natural teeth healthy and functioning long term, it is recommended to protect these teeth with dental sealants.

### Who Should Get Sealants?

Sealants are a thin coat of glossy resin material painted on a tooth (premolar/molar) to cover and protect the deep grooves and pits from collecting food particles like sugars and bacteria (plaque). This prevents cavities (decay).

While adults can benefit from sealants, it is normal for a dentist to create a treatment plan that includes sealants for children as their tooth pits and grooves are more susceptible to cavities for a variety of reasons, for instance developing oral hygiene habits and diet. The procedure may be completed in a mobile dental unit at school, clinic, or dental office.

### Sealant Process

The process of placing a sealant is painless, quick, and easy, with no needle injection involved!

- The tooth is isolated with cotton rolls
- The tooth is rinsed and cleaned with a gel from a syringe
  - The gel is rinsed with water and the tooth is dried with air using a nifty dental air/water syringe tool next to the dental chair
- Sealant material is placed on the tooth using a syringe
- A special light is shined on the tooth to harden the sealant

That's it! The bite might feel funny at first, but the sensation will go away shortly.



### Sealants and Dental Benefits

Sealants are considered Class A services. Be sure to review Section 7- General Exclusions as there may be limitations on the teeth, age, frequency, and replacement.



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