



## Dental Sealants Shield Kids From Tooth Decay

A dentist can help protect your child's teeth from cavities with an invisible plastic coating called a dental sealant. The American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommend sealants as a powerful weapon in the arsenal against tooth decay.



Usually applied to the chewing surface of back teeth, sealants fill the tiny grooves and pits where bacteria often lodge – and where most cavities develop in children and teens. If bacteria are unable to penetrate tooth enamel, they can't multiply and cause decay. **Recent research shows that sealants not only protect healthy teeth but can also stop decay in its beginning stages – preventing future cavities for up to 10 years.**



Applying sealants is a quick and simple process. There is very little discomfort, if any, and your child will be able to eat immediately afterward. **Sealants can last for as long as five to 10 years.** They should be checked at regular dental exams and can be reapplied if necessary.



**Sealants can be most beneficial when your child's second (or permanent) set of molars have just erupted – before teeth have a chance to decay.** Most children's first molars appear between the ages of 5 to 7 and the second permanent molars appear between 11 and 14 years of age.



Sealants work and are safe for kids! They have been shown to reduce the risk of cavities in covered teeth. Considering the lifetime cost of a single cavity is more than \$2,000 (fillings need to be replaced on a regular basis and often result in the placement of a crown), **protecting your child's teeth with sealants is a good investment in their oral health.**