

Sealants for Smiles

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease affecting Utah children. **Sealants for SmilesSM** is a nonprofit, public charity dedicated to reducing childhood tooth decay throughout Utah. It is the **mission** of **Sealants for SmilesSM** to improve the oral health of at-risk children in our community. At **no cost** to parents or schools, **Sealants for SmilesSM** visits four Utah counties to provide 2nd & 6th grade children with the following:

- ☺ Oral health education to parents and students
- ☺ Smiley bags which include essential dental care supplies
- ☺ Dental screenings and recommendations for additional needed dental treatment
- ☺ Application of dental sealants to eligible children

How do *sealants* help prevent tooth decay?

As a back tooth or molar grows, grooves and pits form on the chewing surfaces. These areas can trap food and bacteria and begin to decay. Sealants block cavity-causing bacteria from invading the grooved and pitted surfaces of the teeth.

Grooves and pits are found on the chewing surface of the back teeth. This area is most common for childhood decay.



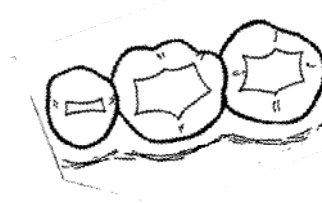
How much do *sealants* cost?

Generally, in a dental office placing one dental sealant can cost far less than filling one cavity. By taking part in the **Sealants for SmilesSM** program your child can receive sealants at **no cost** to you or your school.

What are *sealants*?

A dental sealant is a plastic material put on the chewing surfaces of back teeth or molars to prevent cavities.

- ☺ Sealants are tooth colored and are not easily noticeable.



A Dental Hygienist paints the sealant material into the grooves and pits to form a protective barrier on the tooth.

How are *sealants* applied?

Sealants are a quick, easy and painless procedure. No shots or drills are used. A Dental Hygienist first cleans and prepares the tooth's chewing surface, and then the sealant is painted on the prepared surface and hardened with an ultraviolet light.

Who should get *sealants*?

Sealants work best on newly erupted back molars. A child should be considered for sealants at 6-7 years old, and again at 11-13 years when the molars appear. These are permanent teeth and will not grow back if they are lost to tooth decay.

- ☺ Sealants may not be appropriate for teeth with decay, fillings or shallow grooves.

How long do *sealants* last?

Sealants can last up to ten years with proper care. Proper care includes regular brushing, flossing and a healthy diet. Most important are regular dental check-ups to make sure your sealants are not chipped or worn away. If needed, sealants can be repaired by a Dental Hygienist by adding more sealant material.

- ☺ If you have additional questions or comments please see our website at www.sealantsforsmiles.org.