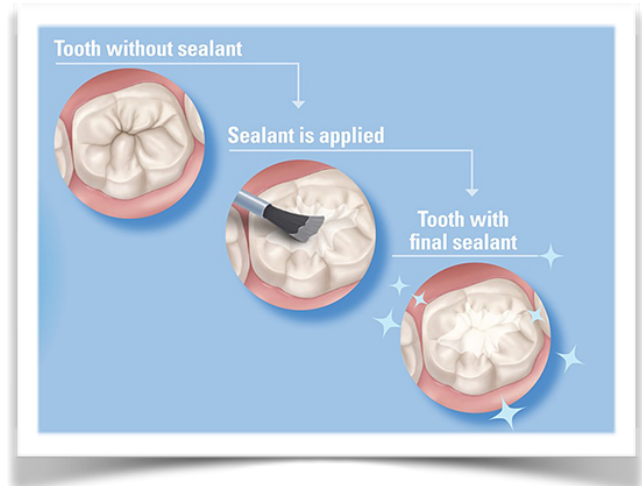


WHAT ARE DENTAL SEALANTS?

Dr. Peter S. Frandsen, San Diego Children's Dentistry

Dental sealants are a thin, plastic material that is bonded directly to the tooth to cover the grooves. Sealants are **one of the most effective preventive measures** you can take to protect your child's teeth from cavities. As teeth form, they develop grooves along the top on the chewing surfaces. These grooves can become a breeding ground for cavity-causing bacteria and the deeper the grooves, the higher the risk of getting cavities. The sealant works by preventing the bacteria from getting into this area and blocking out these grooves from foods and acids. In fact, studies have shown that dental sealants can reduce cavities by up to 85%!



Parents often wonder if all teeth need sealants. In general, it is recommended to seal permanent molars (they usually start coming in around ages 6-7) and any baby molars that have a higher risk for getting cavities.

Preventing cavities is easier than treating cavities

Sealant placement is a very simple, pain-free procedure and no tooth structure is removed. First, the tooth is cleaned with a gel, rinsed, and dried. Then the sealant material is spread thin and evenly across the chewing surface and bonded to the tooth with a curing light. That's it! As long as the sealant remains bonded to the tooth, it will stop chewing-surface cavities which is why it's important to have your child's sealants evaluated periodically to make sure they are still doing their job properly.

Dr. Frandsen is an ABPD Board Certified Pediatric Dentist, a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and works at San Diego Children's Dentistry in Poway and Rancho San Diego



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