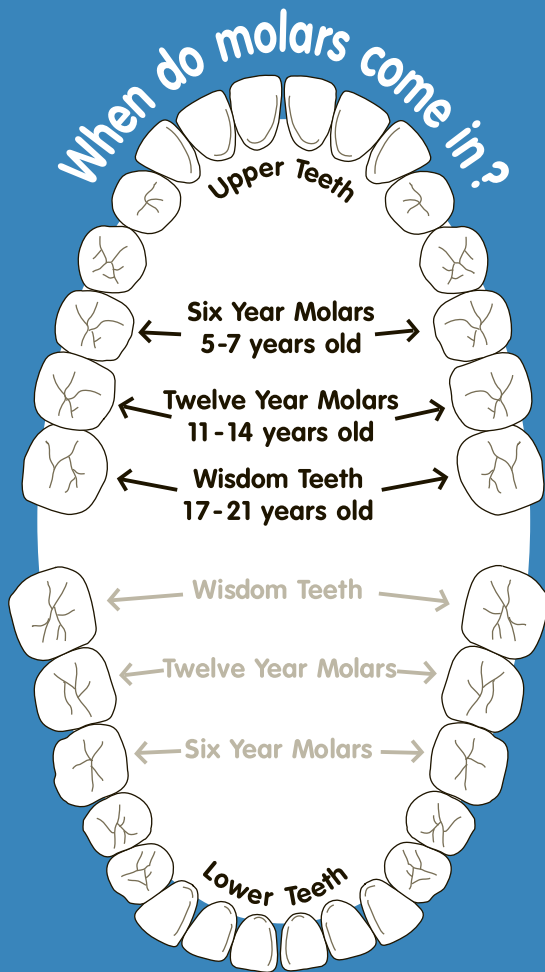


Permanent molars often need sealants to protect them from decay.

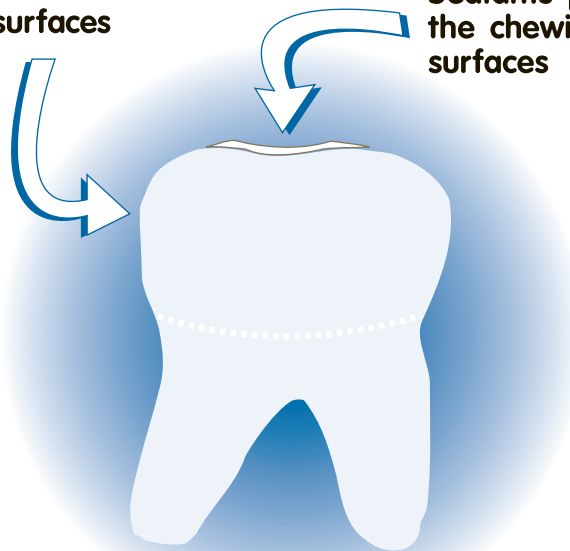


The best time to put sealants on teeth is just after the permanent molars appear, but before decay starts.

## Fluoride and Sealants Together Protect the Entire Surface of the Tooth from Decay

Fluoride protects the smooth surfaces

Sealants protect the chewing surfaces



Ask your dentist about sealants and fluoride.

### For Total Protection From Decay:

- ✓ Get dental sealants if needed
- ✓ Make sure you're getting fluoride
- ✓ Brush and floss every day
- ✓ Eat a nutritious diet
- ✓ Visit your dentist regularly

## Dental Sealants Seal Out Tooth Decay

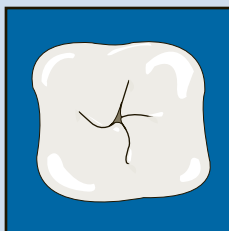
Sometimes nice smiles need extra protection from tooth decay. Dental sealants prevent decay.



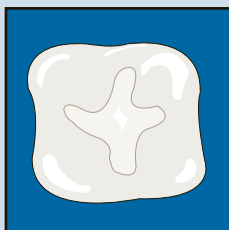
### What are dental sealants?

Dental Sealants are thin plastic coatings that cover the chewing surfaces of back teeth. These back teeth are called molars. Sealants protect molars from decay.

## Why are molars at risk for decay?



As a molar grows, pits and grooves form on the top of the tooth. These grooves can trap food and bacteria and cause decay.



A dental sealant fills the grooves. This keeps food out and makes it easier to keep the tooth clean.

## Who should get sealants on their teeth?

Children should be checked by a dentist to find out if sealants might prevent decay. The best time to check would be just after the six-year molars appear. Teeth should be checked again just after the twelve-year molars appear. These molars are permanent teeth and will not grow back if they are lost to decay.

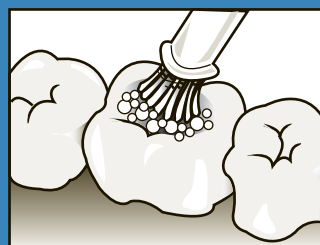
## Do baby teeth need sealants?

Sometimes baby teeth have pits and grooves that are deep enough to trap food and cause decay. This could make them come out earlier than they should. Sealants can prevent problems. Your dentist can advise you if sealants are recommended for your child.

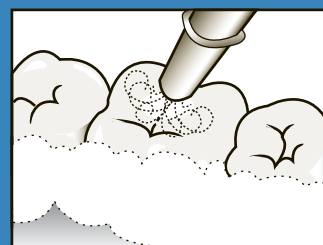
## Does it hurt to have sealants put on teeth?

No, getting a sealant is painless. It only takes about five minutes per tooth. No drilling or shots are necessary.

# How Dental Sealants are Applied to Teeth



1. The tooth and all of the pits and grooves are cleaned thoroughly.



2. The tooth is dried with air. Cotton is put around the tooth to keep it dry.



3. A solution is put on the tooth to make the sealant stick better.



4. The sealant is applied to the tooth. It flows into the pits and grooves.

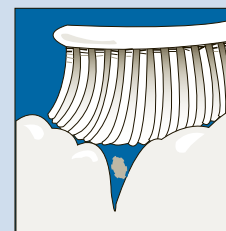


5. A special light is used to quickly harden the sealant.

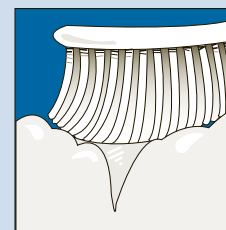


6. The new sealant will help to protect the tooth from decay for many years.

## How do sealants prevent decay?



Toothbrush bristles cannot clean out food and bacteria trapped in open grooves.



Dental sealants fill pits and grooves. This keeps food out, and makes the tooth easier to clean.

## How long do sealants last?

Sealants should last up to ten years with proper care. Proper care includes regular brushing and flossing and a healthy diet, low in sweets. Children should not chew ice or bite hard objects, such as hard candy. Sealants that are damaged or loosened can easily be repaired by your dentist.

## How much do sealants cost?

Generally, sealing one tooth costs less than filling one tooth. Unfortunately, a filling is usually just the first step to saving a tooth damaged by decay. Decay prevention with sealants and regular care is cheaper in the long run.

## Why is preventing decay with sealants better than repairing a diseased tooth?

Sealants can prevent decay and save the structure of the natural tooth. Sealants can prevent the pain caused by decayed teeth. Sealants can prevent the trouble, expense, and discomfort of dental repairs.