



Sealants for Your Child Now—A Healthy Smile Tomorrow

A helmet for bike rides, seatbelts in the car and shin guards during soccer ... but what about your child's teeth? How can you protect them from the damage of cavities?

Dental sealants may be the protection you're looking for. These sealants, which are clear, resin materials applied by a dentist to the surface of molars and premolars, have proven to be quite effective at helping to prevent cavities. Because the top surfaces of the back teeth contain grooves that easily trap plaque, using sealants to fill these grooves is a great way to help prevent cavities that most commonly occur during childhood.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SEALANTS...

- Dental sealants are best applied when the first permanent molars erupt, around age 6, or when permanent molars erupt around age 12.
- Sealants are applied by a dentist who first cleans the teeth to be sealed and roughens them with an acid solution, providing a surface that will help the sealant adhere to the tooth. The sealant is then painted on the tooth, where it bonds directly to the tooth and hardens.
- Generally, sealants are not visible and last from 5 to 10 years.

For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more "Dental Health 101" tips, visit us online at www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com.