

SEALING OUT TOOTH DECAY

Did you notice our article last month on diagnosing and finding decay by the use of DIAGNOdent? Well, this month we will talk about “Sealants” as a method of preventing decay.

What are dental sealants?

A dental sealant is a hard, slick plastic material placed in the grooves of the biting surfaces of your healthy molars. This hard plastic material makes it harder for plaque to stick to the biting surface, harder for food to get stuck in the deep grooves of your molars, and helps reduce the risk of cavities forming.

When are dental sealants needed?

Usually at your 6 month or yearly exam and cleaning, your dentist will suggest applying dental sealants if there are healthy molars without any past or active decay associated with the biting surface of that tooth.

How are sealants applied?

The three-step process is simple, pain free, and does not require any drilling. First, your dentist or dental hygienist prepares the tooth by washing it with a special solution. The tooth is then dried and must be kept dry until the sealant is finally painted on the tooth. The final step is to “cure” the sealant with a special light for about one minute. That’s it! Once the sealant is “cured” the patient may chew as normal.

How long do sealants last?

A dental sealant will last from 5 – 10 years, and should be checked at your routine dental visits to make sure it is still in tact and not worn.

How much do sealants cost?

Sealants cost much less than a one surface filling would cost if the tooth was left to decay. Generally, most insurance companies cover the cost of a sealant once per tooth before a certain age. Check with your carrier for details.

A sealant is an inexpensive method of preventing tooth decay, and will save money in the long run by keeping the tooth healthy. If you are interested in finding out more about sealants, feel free to contact us. We would be glad to schedule an appointment for you with Dr. Amie Rockow-Nelson to determine whether dental sealants are an option for you.