

Sealants – Seal Out Tooth Decay

What causes cavities?

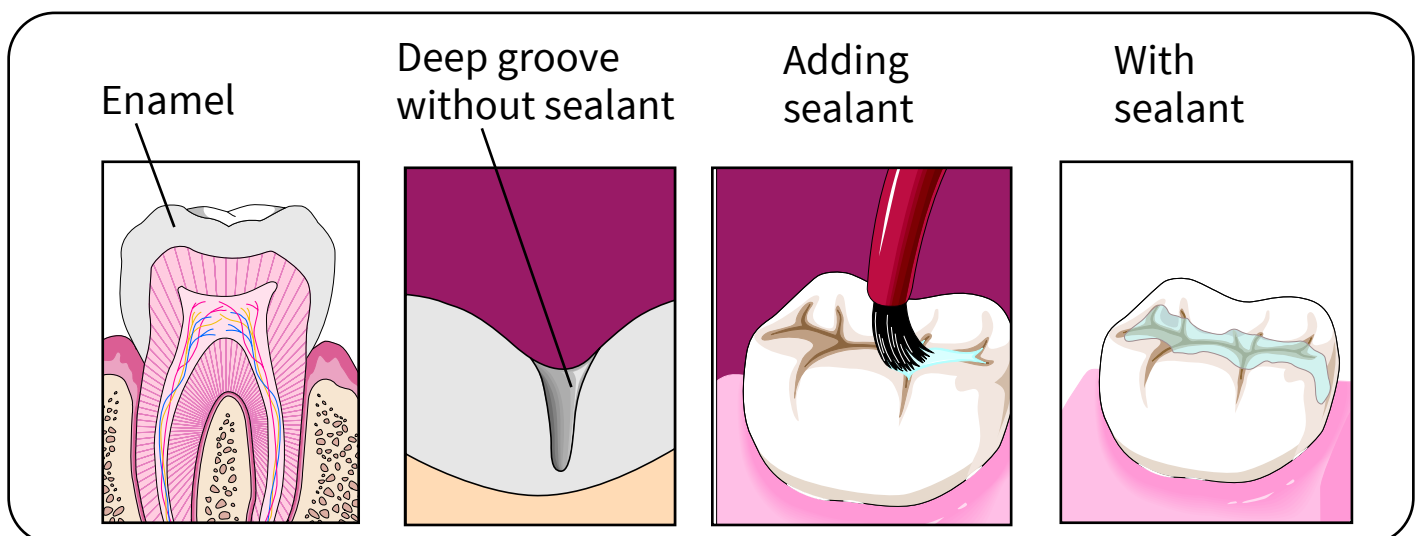
- Sugar in food and plaque in the mouth can lead to tooth decay (tooth breakdown).
- Plaque is a thin, hard-to-see layer of germs that covers the teeth and gums. These germs use the sugar in food and drinks to make acid.
- This acid eats away at the hard outer layer of the teeth (called enamel) and causes tooth decay.
- There is more risk of tooth decay the longer food and sugary drinks stay on the teeth.

What is a sealant?

- A sealant is a clear or coloured plastic that a dentist, dental hygienist, or dental assistant puts on the chewing surfaces of your back teeth (molars). This is where most decay happens. Sealing a tooth only takes a few minutes.

How do sealants help?

- Molars often have deep grooves that toothbrush bristles cannot reach. Because these grooves are hard to clean, plaque and food collect in them and cause tooth decay. Sealants fill the grooves and protect teeth from decay.



When is the best time to get sealants?

- Sealants can be put on permanent molars. The best time is when the molars have come all the way in.

How long do sealants last?

- Sealants usually last for several years. Sometimes, a sealant may need to be replaced.

Does MSI (provincial health care) pay for sealants?

- Under the MSI Children's Oral Health Program, the cost of sealants is covered for all permanent molars.

For more information about the MSI Children's Oral Health Program:

- › Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist.
- › Visit: <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/children-dental>
- › Phone (toll-free): 1-888-711-1119

Seal out tooth decay.

Ask your dentist or dental hygienist about sealants for your children.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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