

Sealants – Seal Out Tooth Decay

What causes cavities?

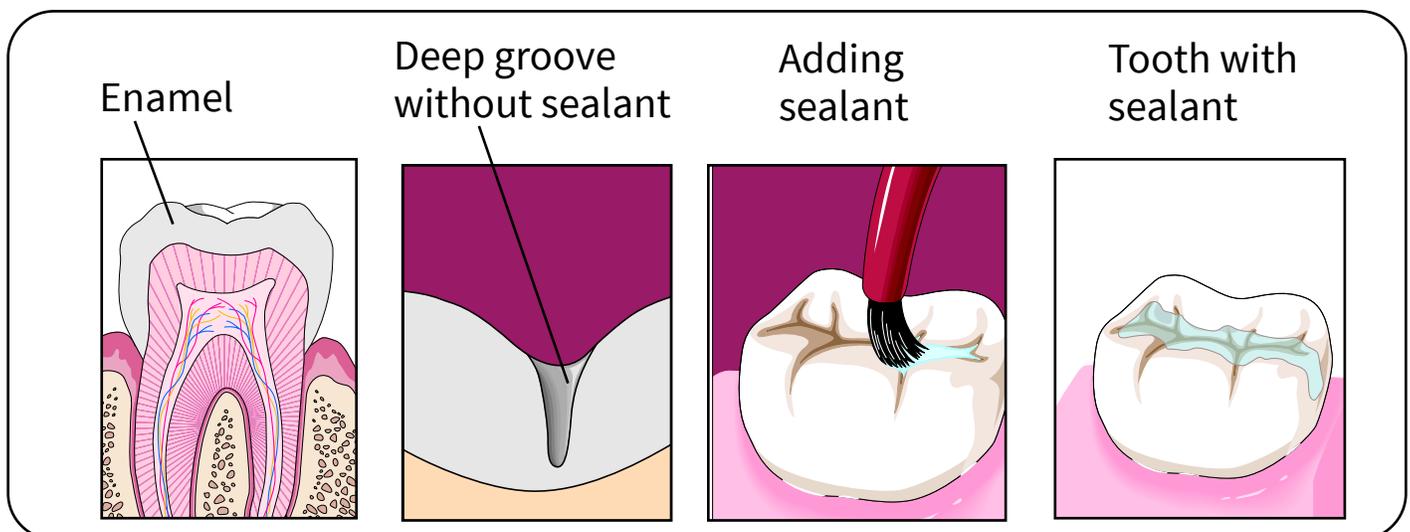
- Sugar in food and plaque in the mouth can lead to tooth decay (tooth breakdown).
- Plaque is a thin, hard-to-see layer of germs that covers the teeth and gums. These germs use the sugar in food and drinks to make acid.
- This acid eats away at the hard outer layer of the teeth (called **enamel**) and 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 your child's 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 MSI's Children's Oral Health Program, the cost of sealants is covered for all permanent molars.

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

- › Talk to your child's dentist or dental hygienist.
- › Visit: <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/dental-programs/children-oral-health-program.asp>
- › Phone (toll-free): 1-833-739-4035

Seal out tooth decay. Ask your child's dentist or dental hygienist about sealants for your child.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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

Prepared by: Public Health

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