

HEALTHY SMILE



HAPPY CHILD

Information for Parents About Fluoride Varnish

Why do we recommend putting fluoride varnish on children's teeth?

Tooth decay is one of the most common preventable diseases seen in children. Children as young as 12 months can get cavities. Cavities in baby teeth can cause pain and prevent children from being able to eat, speak, sleep, and learn properly. Children do not lose all their baby teeth until they are about 13 years old.

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a dental treatment that can help prevent tooth decay, slow it down, or stop it from getting worse. It is made with fluoride, a mineral that can strengthen tooth enamel (the outer coating on teeth). Keep in mind that treatments cannot completely prevent cavities. Treatments can best help prevent decay when a child is also brushing using the right amount of toothpaste with fluoride, flossing regularly, getting regular dental care, and eating a healthy diet.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Fluoride varnish is safe and used by dentists and doctors all over the world to help prevent tooth decay in children. Only a small amount is used, and hardly any fluoride is swallowed. It quickly hardens after application. Some brands may make teeth look yellow. Other brands make teeth look dull. However, the color of your child's teeth will return to normal after it is brushed off. Most children like the taste.

How is fluoride varnish put on the teeth?

Fluoride varnish is painted on the top and sides of each tooth with a small brush. It is sticky but hardens quickly after application. Your child may feel the hardened varnish with his tongue but will not be able to lick it off. There is no pain when it is applied. However, young children may still cry before or during the procedure. Fortunately, applying the varnish only takes a few minutes.

How long does the fluoride last?

The fluoride coating works best if done 3-4 times a year. The number of treatments depends on how likely it is that your child may get a cavity.

Baby Teeth are Important!

Remember, do not clean your child's teeth today and do not give them hot, hard or sticky foods. Start cleaning your child's teeth tomorrow morning. The yellow color will come off when you brush your child's teeth.

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Dental Sealant Information for Parents

What are dental sealants?

Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings which are applied to the chewing surfaces of the molars (back teeth). Most tooth decay in children and teens occurs in these surfaces. Sealants cover the chewing surfaces to prevent decay.

Which teeth are suitable for sealants?

Permanent molars are the most likely to benefit from sealant application. First molars usually come into the mouth when a child is about 6 years of age. Second molars appear at about age 12. It is best if the sealant is applied soon after the molars have erupted, before the teeth have a chance to decay. For that reason, children between the ages of 5 and 15 benefit most from sealants.



How are sealants applied?

Applying sealants does not require drilling. It is an easy three-step process: A dentist or dental hygienist cleans the tooth with a special toothpaste. A special cleansing liquid, on a tiny piece of cotton, is rubbed gently on the tooth and is washed off. Finally, the sealant is painted on the tooth. It takes about a minute for the sealant to form a protective shield.



What are the benefits of sealants?

Sealants are slippery and make it harder for plaque that causes decay to stick in the pits and grooves of molars. Because sealants can prevent more than 80% of dental decay in children, they reduce the need for fillings and other more expensive treatment. Sealants are an economical preventive measure to keep teeth healthy for years.

Are sealants visible?

Upon close examination sealants can be seen. Sealants can be clear, white, or slightly tinted. Because they are used only on the back teeth; sealants cannot be seen when a child talks or smiles.

Will sealants replace fluoride?

NO. Fluorides, such as those used in community water, and toothpaste also help to prevent decay. Fluoride works best on the smooth surfaces of teeth. The chewing surfaces on the back teeth, however, have tiny grooves where decay often begins. Sealants keep germs out of the grooves by covering them with a safe plastic coating. Sealants and fluorides work together to prevent tooth decay.

How long will sealants last?

One sealant application can last for as long as 5 to 10 years. Sealants should be checked regularly, and reapplied if they are no longer in place.

Are sealants safe and effective?

Yes. Dental sealants have been used for more than 40 years. Clinical studies have shown sealants to be very effective in reducing tooth decay in children. Dental sealants are safe, effective and economical.

Why is sealing a tooth better than waiting for decay and filling the cavity?

Sealants help maintain sound, intact teeth. Decay destroys the structure of the tooth. Each time a tooth is filled, or a filling is replaced, additional tooth structure is lost. Fillings last an average of 6 to 8 years before they need to be replaced. Appropriate use of sealants can save time, money, and the discomfort associated with dental treatment procedures.

Sealants help prevent decay!

