Reduce childhood tooth decay with sealants

When a child visits the dentist, you want to hear: “No cavities.” Regular brushing helps prevent cavities. But there’s another tool that you do not want to overlook: dental sealants.

What are dental sealants and how do they work?

Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings. They are painted onto the chewing surfaces of your child’s back teeth (molars), where most tooth decay starts. As molars develop, pits and grooves form on top. Food and germs get caught in these spaces and toothbrushes can’t easily reach them. The result can be decay which are sometimes also called cavities or caries.

With dental sealants, your dentist covers the molars with a protective coating. Applying sealants is fast, easy and painless. Sealants produce a smooth surface that can be easily brushed and will last for years. A smooth surface is less likely to allow bacteria in the mouth to lodge in the teeth and cause cavities.

You should know:

• Sealants are one of the best ways to help kids avoid tooth decay.
• Sealants are safe and easy. They do not cause pain when applied.
• Depending on your benefits, sealants are usually covered as a preventive service.
Applying sealants is fast and painless for your child:

1. First the dentist or dental hygienist rubs the tooth surfaces with a solution that cleans them and allows the sealant to stick better.
2. After a minute, the solution is washed off. The teeth are dried with air.
3. The sealant is painted on the chewing surface of each molar.

The sealant will bond to the tooth and harden into a protective shield. Applying sealants usually takes five minutes or less per tooth. Once the sealants harden, your child can eat and drink normally.

How much do sealants cost?

Sealants are usually covered by dental insurance as a preventive service. Preventive services usually require little or no out-of-pocket payment. Sealants can save you money in the long run because they help prevent cavities. You’ll save on costly dentist bills, and your child will enjoy strong, healthy teeth.