

# Seal the Deal: Cut Down on Decay with Sealants

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Cutting down on tooth decay in your most cavity-susceptible teeth can be as easy as a quick dentist appointment to get sealants.

Dental sealants are made of a plastic coating that covers the natural pits and grooves of molar teeth. These areas can be hard to reach with regular brushing and flossing and bacteria love to hide there. The sealants provide a barrier between healthy tooth enamel and decay-causing bacteria and acids.

The procedure is pretty quick and totally painless. Here's how it works: after a thorough cleaning, the dentist will place a gel on the chewing surface of the tooth to roughen it up a bit and make the plastic coating stick better. After the gel is washed off, the sealant is painted on and left to dry. A curing light may be used to help it harden. The whole process takes just a few minutes per tooth.

Sealants typically last five years or more and can help prevent the formation of new decay by up to 70 percent, potentially saving you a lot of money in crowns and fillings!



A child gets a sealant application as part of his school-based dental sealant program funded by the Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation.