



This patient information sheet answers frequently asked questions about having fissure sealants. It has been developed to be used in discussion with your dental practitioner.

1. What is a fissure sealant?

Fissure sealants are thin coatings of white or clear dental material applied to the grooves (fissures) and pits of teeth. Most fissure sealants are applied to chewing surfaces of molars (back teeth). They protect the tooth surface from tooth decay by keeping food and plaque out of the grooves.

Not all fissures and pits require sealing. Your dental practitioner will let you know which teeth are at risk of future tooth decay and therefore may need to be sealed.



Image 1: Fissures in a molar tooth

2. How do fissure sealants help protect your teeth?

If fissures and pits are deep, removing trapped food or plaque can be difficult. This can lead to tooth decay.

Fissure sealants help prevent food or dental plaque getting trapped by 'sealing off' the fissures and pits. The sealants therefore make it easier to keep the teeth clean with regular teeth brushing.

The first permanent molar teeth come through around 6 years of age. The ability of children at this age to effectively clean the fissures of these teeth is limited. Sealing these teeth can greatly reduce the risk of tooth decay.

3. How are fissure sealants applied?

The process of applying a fissure sealant does not normally require any drilling or removal of any parts of your tooth. After the tooth is thoroughly cleaned, a gel is applied for the necessary time (usually a few seconds). The gel prepares the surface of the tooth. The tooth is then washed, dried and inspected. While keeping the tooth dry, the sealant is placed on the surface of the tooth and it then flows into the pits and fissures of the tooth. The liquid is then left to set or it may be hardened with the use of a blue light.

Your bite is checked to make sure the sealant does not interfere with the way the teeth bite together.

4. What are the risks and complications of fissure sealants?

There are no common risks or complications associated with fissure sealants, although they may need replacement over time. Uncommon complications include irritation of the soft tissues in the mouth.

Death as a result of this procedure is extremely rare.

Further information is available from your dental practitioner.

5. Who will be applying your fissure sealant?

Your fissure sealant may be applied by your dental practitioner or dental student who has had training to undertake the procedure.



