



# Why are sealants important?



Sealants help prevent cavities on back teeth



Sealants are covered by most insurances



Placed by dentists or community programs



Can last up to 10 years

**Making sure your child has a healthy mouth, teeth and gums begins with encouraging good habits like these at home:**

- Brushing and flossing at least twice a day
- Eating or drinking foods that are good for your teeth (milk, water, fruits and vegetables)
- Visiting the dentist at least once a year

Sometimes, even when these healthy habits are followed, a child might still get a cavity. One of the best ways to keep your child's teeth healthy is to have a sealant applied to them.

## What are sealants?

Sealants are plastic coatings added to the chewing surfaces of back teeth to prevent decay. Sealants should be placed as soon as possible after these teeth come through the gums, usually around age 6 for first molars, and age 12 for second molars.

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### Who places sealants?

Most sealants are placed by dentists in their office, but you can also get them at some school-based sealant programs or community clinics. Placing sealants takes just a couple of minutes and is completely painless.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that sealants can prevent 80% of cavities on back teeth, while school aged children without sealants are three times more likely to have tooth decay on their first molars than children who have sealants.\*

### How long does a sealant last?

A well-placed sealant can last up to 10 years, though it can chip or wear and may need to be repaired or replaced. Sealants on first and second permanent molars are covered by most insurances, including Delta Dental of Virginia.

### How do you find sealants?

Talk with your dentist about dental sealants. If you need a dentist for your child and do not have one:

- Call your dental insurance provider.
- Ask the school nurse if they have a school sealant program at your child's school (many do and most are free).
- Call a clinic near you to see if they have dental services at no charge or at a low cost.

**To find a dentist near you, visit us online at [DeltaDentalVA.com](https://www.DeltaDentalVA.com) and use the Find a Dentist tool.**

\*<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/dental-sealants/index.html>