

Dental Sealants



“...effective in the prevention of tooth decay.”



Oral Health Nevada Inc.: A Fact Sheet

What is the public health issue?

Oral health is important for overall body health. Tooth decay, or cavities, are preventable infections caused by bacteria in the mouth. It is the most common long-lasting disease in children. Adults and children living in communities without fluoride in the tap water, and those who can't see a dentist often are at-risk for tooth decay. If tooth decay is found very early, it might be treated with fluoride or dental sealants. If left untreated, tooth decay can destroy teeth, cause pain, and eventually lead to tooth loss. With tooth decay and tooth loss, it can be hard to do well in school or work, eat healthful foods, and feel good about one's smile.

Tooth without a dental sealant



Tooth with a dental sealant



What are dental sealants, and how do they prevent cavities?

A dental sealant is a thin plastic material placed on the pits and fissures of the chewing or biting surfaces of teeth. Since tooth decay usually starts in deep pits and fissures, dental sealants can cover them up and keep decay-causing bacteria and food away. Resin-based dental sealants can be 100 percent effective at preventing tooth decay if they are fully retained on the tooth's top surface. Sealants may also stop the growth of tooth decay, and could prevent the need for expensive dental fillings.

Why are school-based dental sealant programs recommended?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that if half of all children at high-risk for tooth decay got sealants in school, over half of their tooth decay would be prevented and money would be saved on their dental treatment costs. School-based sealant programs give effective tooth decay prevention to all children of all cultures and backgrounds reducing oral health disparities.

In Nevada:

- ✓ Only those residents living in Clark County receive the health and economic benefits of community water fluoridation
- ✓ We support sealant programs in school settings

How is Nevada doing?

In 2009, Nevada found:

- ✓ 64% of third graders have experienced tooth decay, while 29% have untreated tooth decay
- ✓ 46% of third graders have received at least one dental sealant on a permanent molar

Are there additional sources of information on dental sealants?

Yes, there are many credible sources including:

- American Dental Association: www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/sealants
- American Academy of Pediatrics: www2.aap.org/oralhealth/pact/ch5_sect6.cfm
- CDC: www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/faqs/sealants.htm

Visit our website – www.oralhealthnevada.com

