

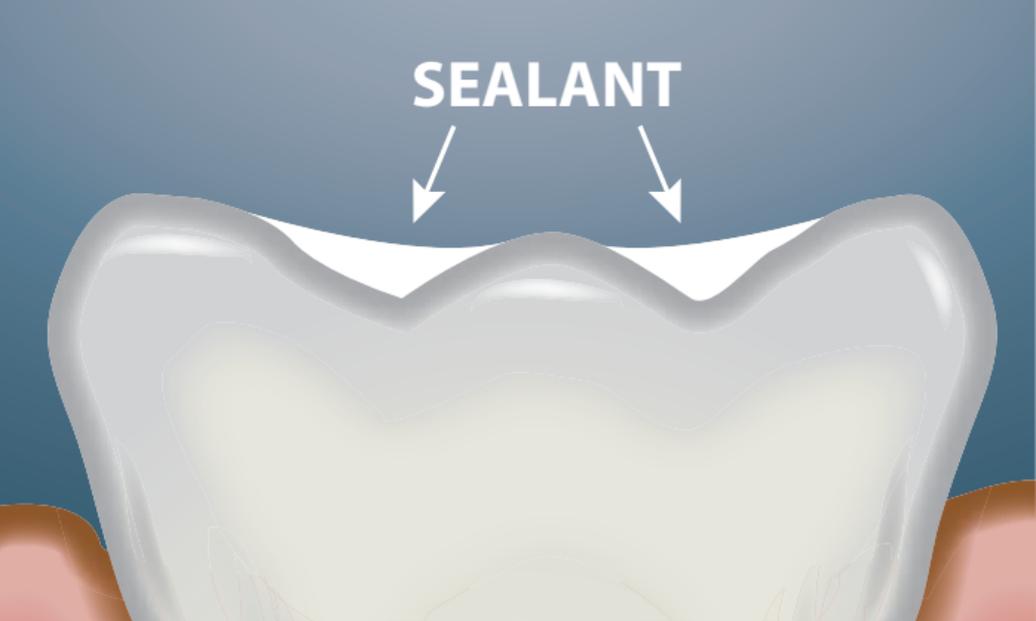
**KEEP YOUR  
CHILD'S TEETH  
HEALTHY!**



**Help prevent tooth decay  
with dental sealants**



**Tooth decay (cavities)** can cause pain and may lead to problems eating, speaking, playing and learning. **Dental sealants** can stop cavities from forming.



## What is a dental sealant?

A dental sealant is a thin white coating applied to the chewing surfaces of the molars (back teeth).

Food and germs can get stuck in the deep grooves of the molars, where toothbrushes can't reach. Sealants cover the grooves to protect teeth from harmful germs. They are safe and effective and can last several years.

## Who should get dental sealants?

Children should be assessed for sealants when their adult molars come in – ages 5 to 7 for the first permanent molars and ages 11 to 13 for the second permanent molars.

Other age groups may also benefit from sealants. Talk to a dentist to find out what is best for your child.

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**To find a dentist, or for help getting low- or no-cost insurance, call 311 or visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search teeth.**

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before

after



*Photos courtesy of NYU Department of Pediatric Dentistry*

## How are sealants applied?

Applying sealants is simple and painless. A dentist or dental hygienist cleans the tooth and applies the sealant with a brush. The protective shield forms instantly.

## How can I get sealants for my child?

Most dental insurance providers, including Medicaid and Child Health Plus, cover sealants at low or no cost to you. Check with your child's dentist, or call your dental insurance company for details.

Call 800-698-4543 for more information about signing up for public health insurance or visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search "dental provider" to find a low-cost dental provider near you.



# HEALTHY HABITS FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

Developing good dental habits early can help your child avoid tooth decay.

- **Take children to the dentist every six months**, starting with the first tooth and no later than age one.
- **Brush at least twice a day** with a fluoride toothpaste. Floss regularly.
- **Eat healthy.** Limit snacking, especially snacks high in sugar or starch, such as sodas, cookies or candy.
- **Drink tap water.** The fluoride in New York City's tap water helps keep children's teeth strong.



