



Tooth Talk

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Healthy Smiles for Siletz Valley School Students

The tribal Dental Clinic seals all children's teeth and many adults' teeth as well. And once a year Dental staff provides screenings and dental sealants to children at Siletz Valley School. This year, we will see children in grades 1-12.

Why are sealants important? Because they prevent cavities on the biting surfaces of molars and premolars – where we get our first cavities. Are sealants painful to have placed on our teeth? No.

How do sealants prevent decay? By sealing the biting surfaces of our molars and premolars.

All our teeth form by the fusing of bud-like structures in our jaw. Generally this fusing of these tooth-forming buds (three to five, depending on the size of the tooth) creates a smooth tooth surface.

There are exceptions. Got a 5- or 6-year-old in your life? Check out the biting edge of his or her front teeth. When these teeth first erupt, there are small scallops on this edge. As children use their teeth, the scallops wear off,

giving front teeth the smooth edge we're familiar with.

Another exception to the smooth fusing of tooth buds is the cusps of molars and premolars. These larger scallops, which aid our chewing, are meant to be sharp projections. Where does the problem come in?

Try this: Take the fingers of one hand, place the pads of our five fingers together and gently squeeze. Look down at the tips of your fingers. What do you see? Pits and grooves where the fingers come together, just like the smaller pits and grooves of our molars and premolars where the buds fuse together.

The pits and grooves of our teeth are huge to bacteria and sugar particles. The combination of bacteria and sugar yield cavities. It's in these pits and grooves that each of us got or will get our first cavities.

So it's not a far stretch to place plastic onto these pits and grooves to seal them. The bacteria inside cannot get more food. Without food the bacteria die. So if we can seal molars and premolars soon enough, we can stop cavities from

forming. In **very small** cavities, sealant can stop the progress altogether, blocking out food and the re-entry of new bacteria.

Siletz Valley School and the tribal Dental Clinic are working together again this year to provide sealant to SVS students' teeth that are appropriate for sealing. "Appropriate" teeth are those that do not have decay or fillings.

Please read the oral health information your student will bring home this month. To have your child participate in this free Sealant Clinic, you must fill out the permission form, sign it, and return the signed form to Siletz Valley School.

Help us help the students at Siletz Valley School have healthy smiles!

This information and that shown below were taken from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse.

Reach them online at www.nidcr.nih.gov. Their booklets on oral health are free and easily downloadable. If you have questions, send an e-mail to toothtalk@ctsi.nsn.us.

Exercise Safety Considerations

Physical activity can lower your blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, and cholesterol. It also can reduce risk for heart disease and stroke, relieve stress, and strengthen your heart, muscles, and bones.

Consider the following when you exercise:

- Drink plenty of fluids before and after exercise.
- Do not exercise if your blood sugar is greater than 250 mg/dl.
- If your blood sugar is less than 100 mg/dl before you start exercising, eat a snack.
- Have carbohydrate-based foods with you when you exercise to treat a low blood sugar that might occur during exercise.
- Take good care of your feet! Wear good-fitting athletic shoes that cushion your feet. Choose clean socks with flat toe seams and without tight elastic.



Learn More About Parkinson's Disease

On April 15, Parkinson's Resources of Oregon will host a conference for patients, families, and health care providers interested in learning more about Parkinson's disease at the Valley River Inn in Eugene, Ore.

The full-day education event begins at 10 a.m. with a keynote presentation, Neuroprotection in Parkinson's Disease: An Elusive Goal, by Dr. Kevin Biglan of the University of Rochester.

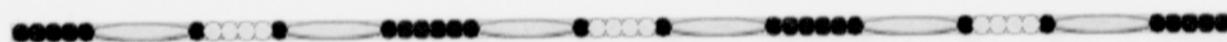
Additional workshops include presentations on nutrition, medications, eye problems, choosing the right residential care facility, and more.

Registration is \$25 per person, with a discount for additional family members. Limited funds are available for scholarships. Registration and scholarship information can be obtained by calling 1-800-426-6806.

Participants also are invited to join Parkinson's Resources of Oregon on April 14 for a dinner presentation by Dr. David Heydrick, a neurologist suffering from Parkinson's disease. He will talk about The Parkinson's Pyramid™, a strategy he developed to cope with the symptoms of the disease.

Dinner is \$25 per person. It's at the Valley River Inn at 6:30 p.m.

For a free newsletter, information, and support, call toll-free 1-800-426-6806.



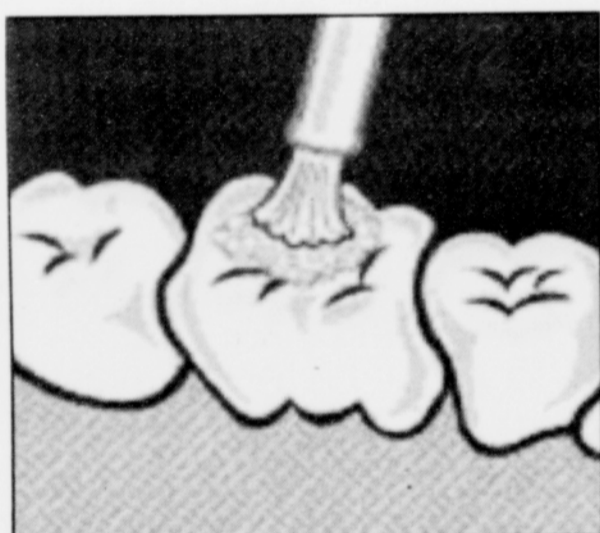
What are Dental Sealants?

Sealants are thin, plastic coatings painted on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth.

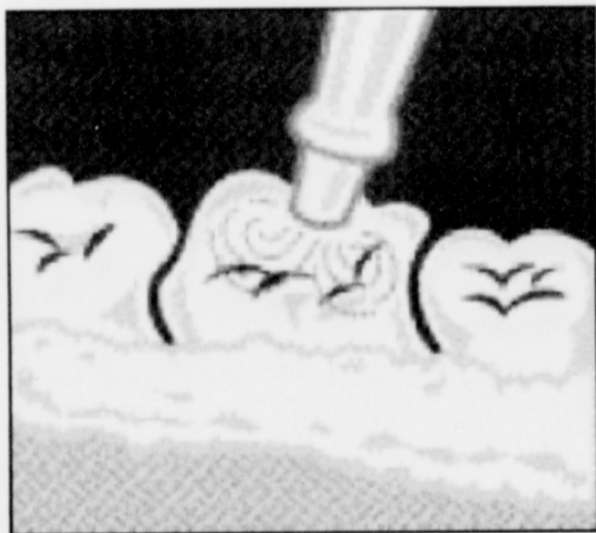
Sealants are put on in dentists' offices, clinics, and sometimes in schools. Getting sealants put on is

simple and painless. Sealants are painted on as a liquid and quickly harden to form a shield over the tooth.

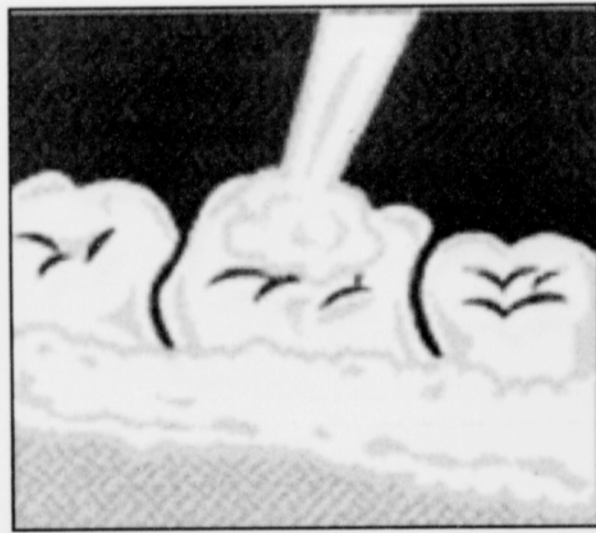
How are Sealants Put On?



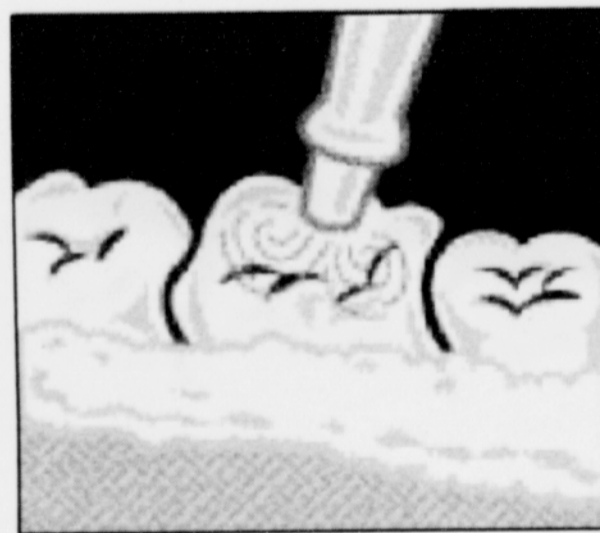
1. The tooth is cleaned.



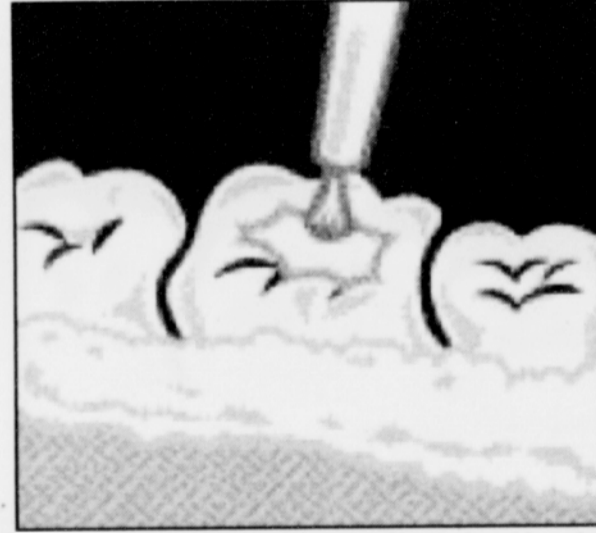
2. The tooth is dried and cotton is put around the tooth so it stays dry.



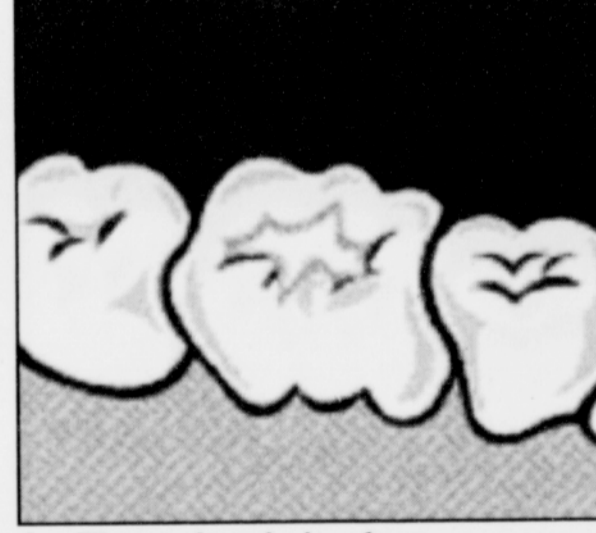
3. A solution is put on the tooth that makes the surface a little rough. (It's easier for the sealant to stick to a slightly rough surface.)



4. The tooth is rinsed and dried. Then new cotton is put around the tooth so it stays dry.



5. The sealant is applied in liquid form and hardens in a few seconds.



6. The sealant is in place.