A dental sealant is a plastic material that is put on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth.

They act like a barrier and protect your tooth’s enamel by “sealing out” bacteria and bits of food. Sealants are a painless and easy way to help protect your teeth and keep them healthy. This brochure will explain how.
Sealants help prevent tooth decay and cavities

Your teeth are coated with a sticky film of bacteria called plaque. Bacteria turn the sugar that’s in what you eat and drink into acids that can break down the hard, outer layer of your teeth, called enamel. Over time, the acid can weaken your enamel and may cause tooth decay, or a hole to form in your tooth’s enamel (a cavity).

Tooth decay often begins on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. These surfaces have pits and grooves that trap plaque and bits of food. Just like in the picture, the pits and grooves are hard to keep clean because toothbrush bristles cannot reach into them.

It takes only a few minutes for your dentist to seal each back tooth.

- Your tooth is cleaned and the chewing surfaces are prepared to help the sealant materials stick to your tooth.
- Then, the sealant is painted onto the chewing surface where it bonds to your tooth and hardens. A special light may be used to help the sealant harden.

Sealants are usually clear or white and can’t be seen when you smile or talk.

Sealants can last for several years

Sealants usually last several years before they need to be replaced. Over time, sealants can come off, which means they will not protect the teeth as well. Chewing on ice or hard foods can also break down sealants.

During regular dental visits, your dentist will check the sealants and reapply them if needed.

You may benefit from sealants at any age

Sealants are most often placed in children and teenagers. But, you never outgrow the risk of tooth decay and cavities, so adults can benefit from sealants, too.

A sealant can be placed on a tooth that does not have a cavity in its pits and grooves. Sometimes a sealant can also be placed on a tooth that has decay at an early stage, before a cavity has formed.

Prevention is always better than treatment!

Sealants are very useful in stopping tooth decay on the back teeth and can save you money over time.