

# What's the deal with sealants?

The best time to stop tooth decay is before it starts. But it's also possible to stop early cavities in their tracks with a simple protective measure that's only now gaining ground.

Dental sealants are not new technology. For over 50 years, they have helped clinicians manage and prevent caries on the occlusal surfaces of primary and permanent molars. So what's new? In August 2016, the American Dental Association and the American Association of Pediatric Dentists published updated guidelines for the use of dental sealants. The biggest takeaway: despite their proven effectiveness, sealants are drastically underused.

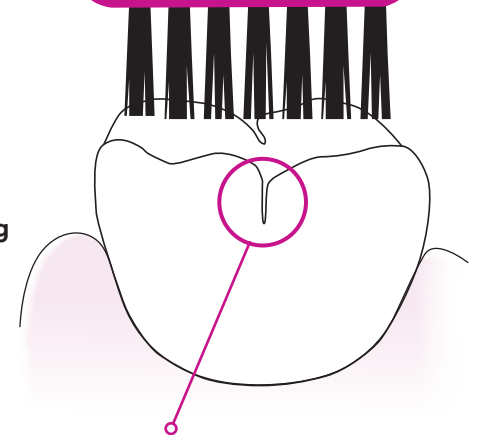
“Sealants are still underused despite their documented efficacy and the availability of clinical practice guidelines.”

– ADA and AAPD<sup>1</sup>

## It's time to get in the groove.

Most tooth decay in children and teens occurs on the chewing surfaces of molars. Grooves on the biting surfaces of teeth can be impossible to clean effectively. Trapped food and germs create acids that eat away at the enamel, increasing the risk of decay. This makes pits and fissures especially prone to caries, and early lesions can quickly deteriorate into full-blown cavities.

Dental sealants fill and seal these grooves, forming a physical barrier to tooth decay. And that's not all: updated ADA and AAPD guidelines now conclude that sealants are effective in **preventing and arresting** non-cavitated carious lesions. Products like 3M™ Clinpro™ Sealant can stop initial lesions in their tracks and help prevent further decay.



Pits and fissures are hard to clean and prone to caries.

## By the numbers

The ADA and AAPD encourage the increasing use of sealants for children and adolescents, who are especially vulnerable to caries.

**76%**

reduction in caries when children receive sealants.<sup>1</sup>

Sealants can prevent approximately

**50%**

of cavities for up to four years.<sup>2</sup>

**98%**

of clinicians are satisfied with the clinical acceptability of sealants.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wright JT., Crall JJ., Fontana M., Gillette J., Novy BB., Dhar V., Donley K., Hewlett ER., Quinonez RB., Chaffin J., Crespin M., Lafolla T., Siegal MD., Tampi MP., Graham L., Estrich C., Carrasco-Labra A. Evidence-based clinical practice guideline for the use of pit-and-fissure sealants. A report of the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. *J Am Dent Assoc* 2016; 147 (8):672-682.

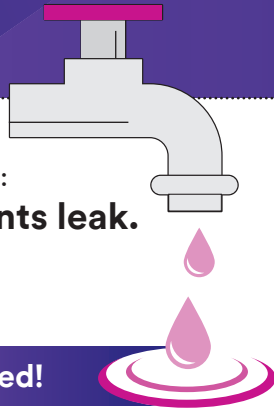
<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dental Sealants Prevent Cavities: Effective protection for children. CDC *Vital Signs* Fact Sheet. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/2016-10-vitalsigns.pdf>. Published October, 2016.

# Myths and misconceptions: Uncovering the truth about sealants.

With so many good reasons to use them, why aren't sealants more popular? A few common misconceptions might deter clinicians from using sealants more frequently. It's time to dispel these myths – so you can get the most out of your sealant.

Learn how 3M™ Clinpro™ Sealant can help protect against tooth decay!  
[3M.com/PreventiveCare](https://www.3M.com/PreventiveCare)

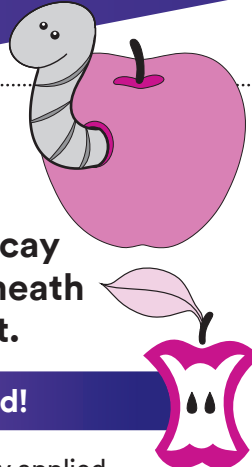
## Myth #1: Sealants leak.



**Busted!**

Sealants don't leak if you use proper technique and make sure there are no voids after curing.

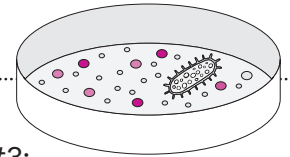
## Myth #2: Teeth will decay underneath sealant.



**Busted!**

A properly applied sealant prevents decay from occurring in the first place.<sup>1</sup>

## Myth #3: If you seal in decay, caries will grow.



**Busted!**

It is safe to seal over carious lesions as long as they are not cavitated; the sealant can prevent further decay.<sup>1</sup>

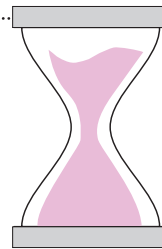
## Myth #4: You should open up fissures with a bur before placing sealant.



**Busted!**

It is safe and minimally invasive to seal over non-cavitated lesions without opening them up.<sup>2</sup>

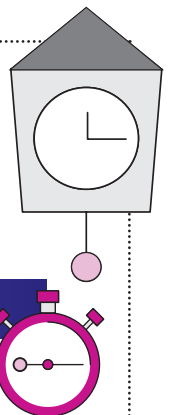
## Myth #5: Sealants don't last.



**Busted!**

When placed correctly, sealants can last up to 5–10 years.<sup>3</sup>

## Myth #6: Sealants are hard and time- consuming to apply.



**Busted!**

3M™ Clinpro™ Sealant goes on pink – so it's easy to see exactly where you are placing it – and cures to a natural-looking white. It also flows easily into pits and fissures for fewer occlusal adjustments.

## So why do sealants fail?

Sealant failure can usually be traced to improper placement technique or salivary contamination – meaning most of these failures can be prevented.



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<sup>1</sup> Center for Scientific Information, ADA Science Institute. Oral Health Topics: Dental Sealants. <https://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/dental-sealants>. Published October 19, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Beauchamp J., Caufield PW., Crall JJ., Donly K., Feigal R., Gooch B., Ismail A., Kohn W., Siegal M., Simonsen R. Evidence-based clinical recommendations for the use of pit-and-fissure sealants. A report of the American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs. *J Am Dent Assoc* 2008; 139 (3):257-267.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Oral Health. Dental Sealants FAQ: How long will sealants last? <https://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/faqs/sealants.htm>. Published July 10, 2013.