

## **Fissure Sealants**

Sealants are a safe and painless way of protecting your children's teeth from decay. A sealant is a protective plastic coating, which is applied to the biting surface of the back teeth.

The sealant forms a hard shield that keeps food and bacteria from getting into the tiny grooves in the teeth and causing decay.

### **What can be done?**

Fissure sealants can be applied to the teeth. Fissure sealants are special materials used by dentists to seal off pits and fissures from the oral environment. Sealing the tooth surface protects fissures from bacteria and fermentable foods like sugar and starches to prevent decay from starting deep within the fissures. Any tooth with pits and fissures can be treated, provided the surface to be filled is sound and has not been previously filled. The most commonly treated teeth are the molars and premolars.

### **How are sealants applied?**

Sealants are applied easily and painlessly. No drilling is required. The tooth is properly cleaned, treated, dried, and the sealant applied. It then hardens to form a protective coating over the tooth.

### **How effective are sealants and how long can they last?**

Many studies show sealants to be very effective in preventing decay in fissures. They do, however, require regular maintenance by your dentist. This can be performed with your six-monthly check-up. Recent studies show that a properly placed sealant will last as long as a typical amalgam filling. Even if a sealant is damaged or lost, it is easily repaired and replaced. Regular maintenance by your dentist will help them last. This can be done with your six-monthly check-up.

### **When should sealants be put on the teeth?**

Sealants are most effective when applied after the eruption of the tooth. Early application ensures pits and fissures are sealed before the decay process begins.