



# What You Should Know About Dental Sealants

Cavities are the biggest chronic childhood disease. Cavities not only cause pain, they can keep a child from being able to eat, speak and sleep properly, which in turn prevents them from learning and enjoying play and recreation. Permanent teeth – those that most children start getting at 6 years of age – will last a lifetime with proper oral health care.

Cavities are preventable. Good oral health care habits practiced daily – along with fluoride varnish applications for baby teeth and dental sealant treatments for permanent teeth – can help keep your child safe from cavities.

Dental sealants are safe, thin, plastic coatings that protect the chewing surfaces of back teeth from tooth decay. The back teeth are where most cavities appear in children's and teens' teeth. Sealants

should be applied when these teeth first come in to help reduce the chances of decay. Sealants are not a substitute for brushing and flossing, but they can help keep cavities from forming.

Dental sealants are safe, painless and long-lasting. Sealants should be applied to first molars that appear about the time a child is 6 years old and second molars, that break through around age 12. Sealants can also be applied to teeth that are in the early stages of decay to prevent further damage. Sealants are clear, white or slightly tinted and usually can't be seen when your child is smiling or talking. There is no drilling involved. It only takes a few minutes for the dentist or hygienist to apply the sealant, which can last for as long as 5 to 10 years. The sealants are checked at your child's regular dental appointments, and can be reapplied if necessary.

## Here's what happens during a dental sealant procedure at Metropolitan Family Health Network:

### The doctor or hygienist will ...

- Check your child's teeth to see how healthy the teeth are.
- Show you and your child how to care for her/his teeth every day.
- Apply the sealant to your child's teeth by:
  - Cleaning the tooth and coating it with a special gel for a few seconds;
  - Rinsing and drying the tooth;
  - Painting the sealant on with a small brush; and
  - Letting the sealant harden for a few minutes.

Talk with your child's Metropolitan Family Health Network doctor and dentist about keeping your child's teeth healthy and growing strong!

935 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City, NJ (right by the Garfield Avenue Light Rail; free parking in our lot!)  
5300 Bergenline Avenue, West New York, NJ  
857 Bergen Avenue, Jersey City, NJ

We accept Medicare, Medicaid and most health care insurances.

Visit [www.MetropolitanFHN.com](http://www.MetropolitanFHN.com) or phone 201-478-5800.

Metropolitan Family Health Network's Seal the Deal program is made possible by a grant from the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.