



## Our Sealants Are Just Peachy

- **What is a sealant?**

A sealant is a protective coating that is placed over the chewing surface of the back molars to protect them from cavities. Molar teeth have deep pits and grooves that collect food and bacteria. Normal tooth brushing does not always remove this debris from deep in the grooves, and the bottom of these grooves is not always protected by enamel (the hard outer part of teeth). This leads to a high risk for decay on these back molar teeth.
- **When are sealants placed?**

Sealants are placed as soon as possible on the permanent 1<sup>st</sup> molars (6 year molars) and on the permanent 2<sup>nd</sup> molars (12 year molars). Traditional sealants have to be placed in a perfectly dry field, which means once the teeth fully erupt into the mouth. Occasionally, we may recommend sealants on the primary molars when a child is high risk for cavities.
- **How long do sealants protect the teeth?**

Sealants are more like an oil change. It is a preventative procedure that will need to be replaced or touched up periodically. Sealants can chip, leak, or come off the tooth, so we examine them closely at each SmileCheck appointment. One can expect a sealant to need some maintenance every 3-5 years depending on the habits of your child.
- **What is special about our sealants?**
  - First, they are peach in color. This allows them to be diagnostic, meaning it helps us make sure they are still doing their job. The most important thing to us is that the sealants prevent cavities, and don't create a situation that helps to create a cavity. The peach color will diminish over time as the sealant wears.
  - Traditional sealants may chip, leaving an edge that can create a spot for bacteria to collect, thus increasing the risk for cavities. Our peach sealant wears away rather than chips out.
  - Our sealants release fluoride to help strengthen the enamel and prevent cavities from forming near the sealant as well.
  - Our sealants allow for minerals from the saliva to pass through to the tooth, allowing for the continued maturation of the enamel underneath. This is very important as newly erupted teeth have softer enamel that hardens over the next two years.
  - Our sealants can be placed in a wet environment, so we do not have to wait until they are fully erupted. Erupting teeth are most prone to cavities because the enamel is the weakest, the hygiene is the worst, and the tooth is very susceptible to getting cavities.
  - **Our sealants are a tremendous value as they will protect the grooves of the teeth for a lifetime without needing maintenance every 3-5 years!**