

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark skin and hair, wearing white-rimmed sunglasses with red frames. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow. The top of the image features a graphic overlay with red and yellow curved shapes.

What is a PIT AND FISSURE SEALANT?

A **pit and fissure sealant** is a plastic coating that can be applied to the chewing surfaces of molars and premolars. This plastic coating acts as a barrier protecting the tooth enamel from cavity causing plaque and acid.

PUBLIC HEALTH

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The York Region logo, featuring a stylized white star or flame shape above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a red and yellow background.

York Region

Why should Pit and Fissure Sealants be applied?

Thorough brushing and flossing can remove food particles and plaque from the smooth surfaces of teeth, but the biting surface of a tooth is formed with pits and grooves. The toothbrush bristles cannot reach all the way into the pits and grooves to remove food and plaque. Dental sealants can prevent tooth decay in these grooves.

How are Pit and Fissure Sealants applied?

Sealants are simple to apply. They can be applied in a dental office or public health clinic.

First, the tooth that is to be sealed must be cleaned and dried. Next, a solution is put on the tooth which conditions the tooth and helps the sealant to bond. The tooth will again be washed and dried and then the sealant is applied. An ultra violet light is used to harden the plastic coating.

Who should get sealants?

Sealants may not be the best choice for everyone. A variety of factors such as the shape of the tooth, diet, oral health and the history of dental decay should all be considered before the sealant is applied.

Once it is determined that a sealant would benefit the child, the sealant should be applied to the permanent molar, ideally as soon as it has fully erupted.

The first permanent molars erupt between the ages of 5 to 7 years. The second permanent molars erupt between the ages of 11 to 14 years.

How long does a sealant last?

Sealants can last for several years. However, they should be checked regularly to make sure that they have not chipped or worn away. Sealants can be re-applied, if necessary.

To speak with the York Region Public Health Dental Program, call 1-800-735-6625 Ext. 74388 or visit york.ca/dental

