



FOCUS ON DENTAL HEALTH

# Are You Concerned About Tooth Decay and Cavities?



## To Protect Your Teeth, You'll Need a Little Help

A well-practiced oral hygiene routine can only protect your teeth so much. That's why sealants and fluoride treatments are an important part of preventative dentistry. Sealants and fluoride treatments help protect your teeth from tooth decay.<sup>1</sup>

### How Sealants Work

Protecting the small pits and grooves (chewing surfaces) of the back teeth with a sealant is quick, painless and important. Often times, toothbrush bristles miss the food and germs stuck there.

Sealants are applied at a dentist's office in a few easy steps:

1. The tooth is cleaned, dried and cotton is placed around the area to keep the tooth dry.
2. To help the sealant stick better, a solution is put on the tooth to make the surface slightly rough.
3. The tooth is rinsed and dried again.
4. The sealant is applied and with the help of a special light, the sealant hardens and dries.

### Where Can You Find Fluoride?<sup>3</sup>

#### Water

Because it occurs naturally, fluoride is found in most water sources—such as rivers, lakes, oceans and most public water supplies.

#### Toothpaste

Brushing twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride and displays the ADA Seal of Acceptance can help prevent tooth decay and cavities.

#### Professional Treatment

Upon your dentist's recommendation, it is possible to have a fluoride treatment during a dental visit. It is usually applied as a varnish, gel or foam.

VBA, in partnership with TruAssure Insurance Company, offers plans that provide easier access to dental care. To learn more, visit [vbaplans.com/dental](http://vbaplans.com/dental).



All TruAssure dental plans are offered in association with the DenteMax Plus dental network arrangement, which includes dentists from the following dental networks: United Concordia, DenteMax and GEHA Connection Dental Network.

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The information contained above is intended to be educational in nature, does not constitute medical advice and should not be relied on as a substitute for actual professional medical advice, care or treatment. If you have any vision or other health related concerns, VBA encourages you to immediately contact your optometrist/ophthalmologist, or any other competent, licensed, medical professional.

1. Mouth Healthy (<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/d/decay>) • 2. Cleveland Clinic (<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/10912-sealants/procedure-details>)  
3. Mouth Healthy (<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/fluoride>) • 4. Mouth Healthy (<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/sealants>) • 5. ADA (<https://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/dental-sealants>) • 6. CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/dental-sealants/index.html>) • 7. ADHA ([https://www.adha.org/resources-docs/7253\\_Fluoride\\_Facts.pdf](https://www.adha.org/resources-docs/7253_Fluoride_Facts.pdf))  
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## What Are Sealants?<sup>4</sup>

A sealant is a thin coating that is painted over the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. It is applied as a liquid, and it hardens to form a shield over the tooth. Sealants will last for several years before they need to be reapplied.<sup>2</sup>

## What Is Fluoride?<sup>3</sup>

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that can help make the enamel (outer surface of teeth) more resistant to tooth decay.

## Did You Know?



Sealants on permanent molars reduce the risk of cavities by 80%.<sup>4</sup>



9 out of the 10 cavities children get occur in the permanent back teeth.<sup>5</sup>



Adding an appropriate level of fluoride to the community water supply has been credited with reducing tooth decay by 50–60% in the United States since World War II.<sup>7</sup>