



FISSURE SEALANTS

When fluoride was introduced into Australian water supplies in the 1960's it was intended that the fluoride would be ingested by children, incorporated into their tooth enamel and confer on them the life time benefits of reduced rates of decay.

This has happened and it has been a major success in preventative dentistry – 60% overall reduction in decay and a 90% decay decrease in the front teeth!

Fissure sealants were introduced about 20 years ago and were tested and proven to make a significant difference to the progress of decay. The fissure sealant is a clear or white plastic resin, which is put onto the surface of the tooth covering the deep 'fissures' or grooves of the chewing surface and sometimes the sides of the teeth.

HOW DO WE 'FISSURE SEAL' A TOOTH

Firstly, we assess the tooth to see if it needs a fissure sealant. If the grooves of the chewing surface or side of the tooth are deep, it is difficult to get the bristles of a toothbrush to clean these areas properly and they are more prone to decay. A fissure sealant 'fills up' these deep fissures and allows easier cleaning and therefore helps prevent decay occurring.

The grooves of the tooth are cleaned to make sure there is no decay present. This is extremely quick and painless. The surfaces of the tooth are then cleaned with a special solution which allows excellent adhesion and then the fissure sealant is applied and cured or 'set' with a special light.

WHEN SHOULD THIS TREATMENT BE DONE

This treatment is usually carried out on the first molars which erupt at about 6 years of age. Most children tolerate this treatment extremely well and to seal four molars takes about 30 minutes. Sometimes it is recommended to have the second molars fissure sealed as well as the deep grooves usually occur on all back teeth. These teeth will erupt at about age 12.

It is now recommended by dental health authorities that your child visit a dentist at around aged 2 and some are even recommending a visit 6 months after the emergence of the first tooth. It is a good idea to introduce your child to a dentist early in life so we can ensure a decay free and problem free dental future. Usually a visit every 12 months is adequate for small children unless your dentist advises otherwise. We always make your child's visit with us fun. We are aware of the impact an experience at the dentist can make on your child's outlook to dentistry and we strive to create an environment that will allow your child to feel comfortable.