

1. What are fissure sealants?

- Fissure sealants are plastic coatings that help to prevent tooth decay when applied to the chewing surfaces of teeth.
 - The chewing surfaces of the **molar** and **pre-molar permanent teeth** are pitted and grooved with lines and fissures, which are difficult to clean. Decay-causing bacteria thrive in these areas.
 - When a fissure sealant is placed into these grooves and fissures, it shields them from **plaque** and food particles. This reduces the risk of decay.
 - The sealant is applied to a dry tooth and is then chemically bonded to it.
 - It is a painless and quick treatment. No **local anaesthetic** is needed.
 - Sealants are tooth-coloured and are quite unobtrusive.
 - They can last for many years.



Before



After

2. When should a tooth be sealed?

- A tooth should be sealed soon after it has **erupted**.
 - A newly erupted tooth is not yet fully calcified (hardened) and is susceptible to decay.
 - The sooner it can be protected by a fissure sealant, the better.
- These sealants will be checked by your dentist every six months, as part of the professional oral care program.
- Sealants can be repaired or replaced if necessary.

3. Which teeth should be sealed?

- The **permanent molars** are usually the teeth to be sealed.
- Where **pre-molar** teeth are deeply grooved or pitted, they should also be treated.
- As much as 90% of all dental caries in schoolchildren occurs in pits and fissures. The teeth at highest risk by far are the permanent first and second **molars**.
- Baby teeth are not usually treated in this way. However, if the baby teeth are very decayed, it is a sign that the child is susceptible to tooth decay. The permanent teeth should then be sealed as soon as possible after they erupt.