

Factsheet

Fissure sealants

What is a fissure?

Fissures are the grooves present on the top, biting surface of the back teeth. These grooves can be very thin and very deep. This can make them difficult to clean with your toothbrush.

What is a fissure sealant?

A fissure sealant fills the deep grooves on the surface of the teeth. A thin layer of filling material fills the grooves. The filling material is usually white or clear. Sometimes the filling material will include fluoride for even more protection.

Why are they needed?

Deep grooves can cause food and bacteria to get stuck. This can increase the risk of tooth decay developing in the grooves.

The fissure sealant stops food and bacteria sticking in the grooves. It also makes the tooth surface easier to brush clean. This can decrease the risk of tooth decay developing.

Who needs fissure sealants?

Fissure sealants are commonly placed in the back adult teeth of children and teenagers. Sometimes other teeth may also need fissure sealant treatment. Not all children or teeth will need fissure sealants. The dentist will let you know if they are needed when they check your child's teeth.

Will a fissure sealant last forever?

No fillings last forever. Using teeth every day can cause fissure sealants to wear away. Sometimes they may break. Regular visits to the dentist let them check that the fissure sealants are still in good condition.

Photo courtesy of Dr Jilen Patel

