



This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of fissure sealants and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or you would like further explanation please ask us.

What are fissures?

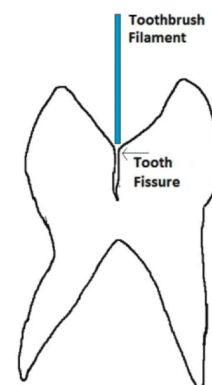
The chewing surfaces of the back teeth have tiny fissures (grooves) on them. However, plaque and sugar can get trapped in them. This can lead to tooth decay. Most tooth decay in children occurs in the back teeth.

Why isn't brushing enough?

The tooth fissures are too narrow for the toothbrush to clean them. Even the finest toothbrush bristle can be too big!

What are fissure sealants?

Fissure sealants are a safe and painless way of protecting your children's teeth from tooth decay. It is a plastic coating (similar to white filling material) which covers the chewing surfaces of the back adult teeth. The sealant forms a hard layer that keeps food and bacteria from getting into the tiny grooves in the teeth. Fissure sealants are placed when the back adult teeth are fully through, at about seven years of age.



How are fissure sealants applied?

The back teeth are cleaned and prepared. Then the sealant liquid is painted onto the surface with a small brush. A special light is used to set the sealant. The process is painless and takes only a few minutes.

How long do they last?

They can last for many years and they are checked at each check-up visit. They can wear over time and they can be added to or replaced if necessary.

Do children still have to brush their teeth?

Yes. It is still important that teeth are brushed twice a day with fluoride toothpaste as sealants only protect the biting surface and the other surfaces are still at risk of decay. The sealed surfaces are easier to clean when tooth brushing. It is also important that children don't eat a lot of sugary foods and drinks especially between meals. These should be kept as treats, or for special occasions.

This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients>