

Van Beek Family Dentistry

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Pit and Fissure Sealants

The rough chewing surface of the back teeth usually have deep crevices we call “Pits and Fissures.” Unlike the smooth sides of the teeth, where few hiding places for plaque and bacteria can be found, the pits and fissures easily trap food and plaques where it is impossible to reach with a toothbrush. Even fluoride in toothpaste or in fluoride treatments has no effect on the plaque trapped in pits and fissures. As a result, these pits and fissures are usually the first areas for tooth decay to begin.

The best way to prevent such decay is to seal the pits and fissures. This is a simple, inexpensive procedure that does not involve freezing, drilling or pain and is usually done by the dental hygienist. A clear or white plastic coating is bonded to the susceptible chewing surface, sealing out the decay-causing bacteria.

Sealants are quick and inexpensive. They are semi-permanent – they last for several years and can be touched up if needed. Because they protect the most susceptible are of children’s teeth during their most cavity-prone years, we recommend them for our young patients. Adults who did not have the advantage of sealants in their childhood often benefit from sealants on susceptible teeth later in life.

Dental benefits for pit and fissure sealants vary; they are cost effective when compared to fillings. The code to check with your benefits is 13401.

Sealants protect the rough chewing surfaces only, so care must be taken to brush and floss to prevent decay elsewhere.