

## **“Sealants Make Sense.”**

Are you ready for the most wonderful time of year? Drum roll please.... Children’s Dental Health Month! The American Dental Association’s Children’s Dental Health Day was first celebrated on February 8, 1949. It became a month-long commemoration in 1981. Forty years later, children’s dental health continues to be promoted throughout February for National Children’s Dental Health Month. Celebrating children’s oral health awareness is incredibly important for the community. Tooth decay remains the most common chronic childhood disease. This year’s theme is Dental Sealants.

Dental sealants are an effective way of preventing cavities in permanent molars, where more than 80% of decay occurs in the permanent teeth of children. Therefore, according to the American Dental Association, sealants applied to permanent molars reduce the risk of cavities by 80%. Now, that is something to celebrate! Brushing and flossing are the best ways to help prevent cavities, but it’s not always easy to clean every nook and cranny of your teeth, especially those back teeth you use to chew. These teeth are called molars. Molars have deep grooves that are rough and a favorite place for leftover food and cavity-causing bacteria to hide. Permanent molars come into the mouth starting around age 6 for 1st molars and age 12 for 2nd molars.

A dental sealant is a thin, protective coating that adheres to the chewing surface of your back teeth and easily applied in a single office visit. They are no substitutes for brushing and flossing, but sealants can keep cavities from forming and may even stop early stages of decay from becoming a full-blown cavity. As long as the sealant stays intact, the tooth will remain protected from decay. It will also, hold up well to normal chewing, and often last for up to ten years. Sealants can eliminate the need for expensive and invasive treatments like dental fillings or crowns.

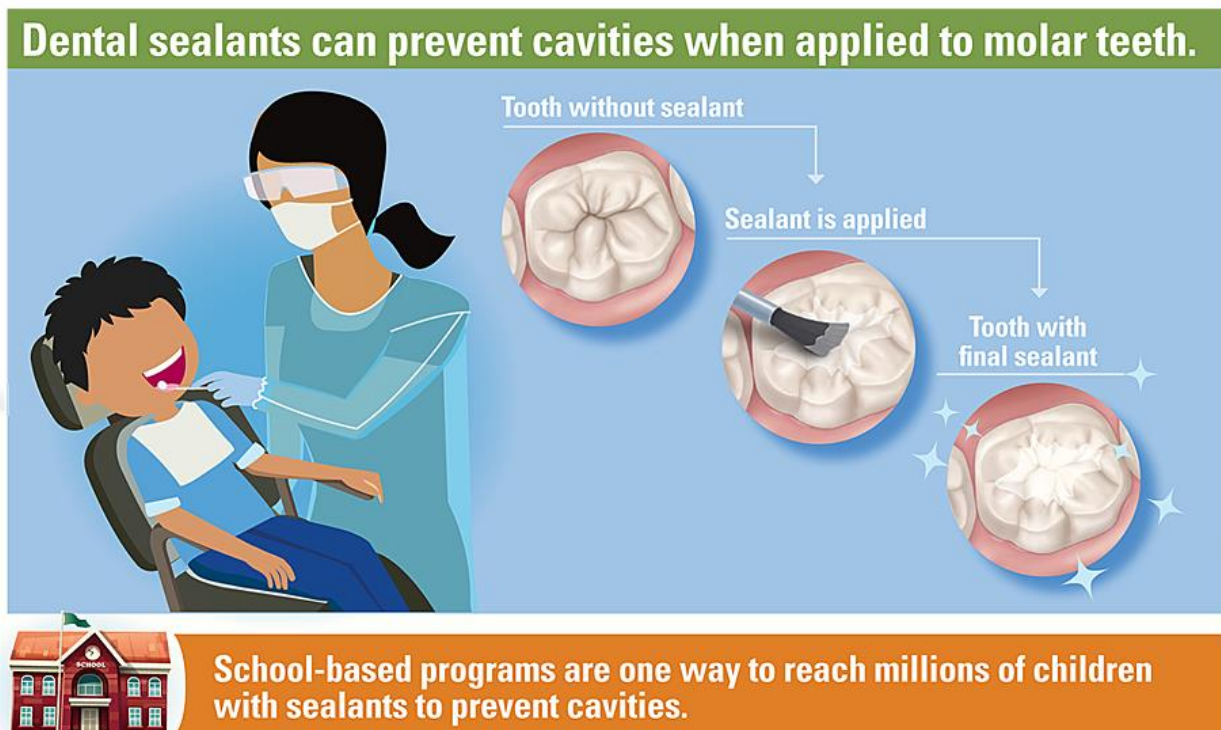


Illustration from the CDC’s website.

Submitted by

Mary Stanczak, Health Services Coordinator  
Head Start/Early Head Start of Beaver County