

CDC Vital Signs

Dental Sealants Prevent Cavities

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A dental sealant is a thin coating that's painted on teeth. It's a quick, easy, and painless way to help prevent cavities in children. Sealants prevent the most cavities when applied soon after permanent molars come in; that's about age six for first molars and age 12 for second molars. Sealants can protect against cavities for up to nine years. They can be applied in dental offices or using portable dental equipment in community settings, like schools.

Although the number of children in the U.S. with sealants has increased over time, low-income children are 20 percent *less* likely to have sealants and *twice* as likely to have untreated cavities than higher-income children. Untreated cavities can cause pain, infection, and problems eating, speaking, and learning. Applying sealants in schools for low-income children could save millions in dental treatment costs.

To learn more, visit [cdc.gov/vitalsigns](https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns).

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.