

# Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Healthy Kids Dental Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2022



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## What are dental sealants?

Tooth decay (cavity) is one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood. By age 19, most children have at least one decayed tooth. One highly effective option to help prevent decay is the use of dental sealants. A sealant is a thin plastic film that is painted on the chewing surface of teeth.

## How do sealants work?

Dental sealants act as a barrier to “seal off” space between the tooth and any small food or bacteria that may otherwise cause a cavity in an “unsealed tooth.” Paired with good oral health care, sealants that are properly maintained are 100% effective against cavities.

Placing sealants on teeth is a quick and easy process. The chewing surface of the tooth is cleaned to help the sealant stick to the tooth. The sealant is painted into the grooves of the chewing surface, where it bonds to the tooth. Sealants prevent tooth decay and stop cavities from growing.

## What age should you get sealants?

Children should have sealants placed when they get their first permanent molars, around 6 years old, and their second permanent molars, which is around age 12. Adults are great candidates for sealants, too. In fact, sealants have been shown to reduce decay by nearly 80% in molars.

Sealants will often last for several years before they need to be reapplied. Ask your dentist if you could benefit from sealants at your next dental visit.



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## We speak your language

You have the right to receive culturally competent care. If you or someone you're helping needs assistance, you have the right to get help and information in your language at no cost. You can also get help finding a dentist that speaks your language. To talk to an interpreter, call the Customer Service number on the back of your card.

## Fraud, waste, and abuse

Report fraud, waste, and abuse in the following ways. You can remain anonymous:

- Call:  
Fraud hotline: **1-800-237-9139**  
Anonymous hotline: **1-866-654-3433**
- Fax: **262-241-7366**
- Mail:  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan  
P.O. Box 491  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0491

Fraud, waste, and abuse can also be reported directly to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services using the following methods:

- Write to:  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Inspector General  
P.O. Box 30062  
Lansing, MI 48909
- Call:  
**1-855-MIFRAUD (643-7283)**
- Online:  
**[michigan.gov/fraud](http://michigan.gov/fraud)**

## Contact us

### Phone

1-800-936-0935; TTY:711

### Website

[bcbsm.com/healthykids](http://bcbsm.com/healthykids)

### Helpful resources

#### **\*Available on the website**

Healthy Kids Dental Benefit Summary

Healthy Kids Dental Handbook

Healthy Kids Dental Certificate of Coverage