

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
Surgeon General and Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

July 2016

Sealing Sunny Smiles Across Florida

The Florida Department of Health Public Health Dental Program's
School-Based Sealant Program Initiative

The Florida Department of Health strongly supports the placement of dental sealants on permanent molars as a primary preventive measure to decrease dental caries. Dental caries, also known as tooth decay, is the single most common chronic childhood disease affecting five times more children than asthma and seven times more children than hay fever.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognize dental sealants are the most effective way of preventing caries in permanent molars.² Dental sealants provide a barrier on chewing surfaces that prevents over 80 percent of cavities in permanent molars after two years of placement.³

Dental sealants are a thin, plastic coating applied to the chewing surfaces of molar teeth. Each sealant application applied to the tooth surface can prevent dental decay for up to five years. Dental sealants expand the Florida Department of Health Public Health Dental Program's efforts to reduce dental caries in school-age children.

The Florida Department of Health's School-Based Sealant Program Initiative, *Sealing Sunny Smiles Across Florida*, is part of a comprehensive statewide oral health program to promote evidence-based prevention strategies in order to achieve optimal oral health for all Floridians. Currently, there are 46 counties throughout the state with Florida Department of Health sponsored school-based dental sealant programs. These programs are fostering a positive dental presence within each community by providing preventive dental care to children who are most at-risk for developing dental caries. To learn more about School-Based Sealant Programs visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health/dental-health/sealant.html> and for more information about sealants <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ukmpx7rd8pE>. The Florida Department of Health Public Health Dental Program, along with the overwhelming majority of states and health care organizations across the country, firmly supports and continues to recommend dental sealant placement through school-based sealant programs as a preventive measure for the reduction of dental caries among children.

Sincerely,

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
Surgeon General and Secretary

References:

¹ Dye, B., Xianfen, L., & Beltran-Aguilar, E. (2012). *Selected Oral Health Indicators in the United States 2005-2008*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *School-Based Dental Sealant Programs*. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/dental_sealant_program/

³ Griffin, S. O., Barker, L. K., Wei, L. Li, C.H., Albuquerque, M. S., and Gooch, B. F. (2014). Use of Dental Care and effective Preventive Services in Preventing Tooth Decay Among U.S. Children and Adolescents – Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, United States, 2003-2009 and National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, United States, 2005-2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 63(02), 54-60