

[Your Agency/School Name]

Questions and Answers about Your School's Dental Sealant Program During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Preventing tooth decay has never been more important than now to keep children healthy and ready to learn. Dental sealants are one of the best ways to prevent tooth decay.

The Ohio Department of Health has written guidelines for schools that wish to again offer dental sealants to students. These guidelines are based on the best available information from state and national experts on how to safely provide sealants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are answers to some questions you may have about your child getting dental sealants at their school:

How safe is placing sealants at school?

Placing dental sealants is very safe. Sealant teams have changed the type of sealant they are using this year to one that does not need the use of water or air spray. This means that no aerosols will form from placing sealants.

Many items used in placing sealants are disposable (used one time, then thrown away), such as cotton rolls and paper bibs. Other items, such as mirrors, are used once, then sterilized. Teams follow strict guidelines to stop the spread of germs.

How will the sealant team check to make sure they are healthy?

Sealant team members (the dental hygienist and the dental assistant) must conduct a daily check for COVID-19 symptoms, including taking their temperature, before going to your child's school in the morning. If a dental team member has symptoms of COVID-19 or has a temperature above 100°F, they are not allowed to come to school and must tell their employer and follow work rules and school guidelines.

If symptoms start while at a school, the team member must follow your school's guidelines on reporting that they do not feel well and leaving the building. A team member who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19 can't return to the school until they have met CDC guidance for going back to work.

How will the sealant team check the health of students who are to get sealants?

All students being seen by the sealant team will have their temperature taken before getting sealants. A student who is showing symptoms of not feeling well or has a temperature above 100°F will not be able to get sealants. The team will follow your school's guidelines to report a student who is showing signs of possible illness, such as a higher temperature.

If your child has special health care needs that you have noted on the consent form, the sealant team or the school nurse may contact you to find out if any changes should be made in how your child will get sealants.

What kinds of safety items will sealant team members wear?

When placing dental sealants, each team member will wear a face mask, eye goggles or a face shield, disposable gloves and a disposable gown.

What other safety measures will be followed?

Your child's hands and the hands of sealant team members will be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after sealant placement. If they have no place to wash their hands, your child and the team must use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Your child will follow school guidelines about wearing a face covering when walking to and from the work area.

Where will the sealant team set up their work area to keep everyone safe?

Sealant teams are asked to set up in an area away from other students, teachers and staff and not work in a hallway or other area where a lot of people are walking by. Only sealant team members and students getting sealants will be in the work area.

Only one student may be brought to a work area at a time. The work area will be cleaned and disinfected after each student.

If my child is not in the school building on the day they are to get sealants, can they still get sealants?

Our sealant teams will work with school staff to try to arrange for your child to be brought to school to get dental sealants on their scheduled day. If your child can't come to school on their scheduled day, the sealant team will try their best to fit your child in on another day.

If you have other questions, please contact Shannon Cole, RDH, BS, Ohio Department of Health, at Shannon.Cole@odh.ohio.gov.