

Falling Short: Most States Lag on Dental Sealants

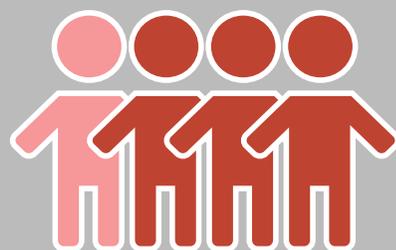
Dental sealants are clear plastic coatings that prevent tooth decay and take only a few minutes to apply to the chewing surfaces of permanent molars, the most cavity-prone teeth.

49,258



Visits by children to emergency rooms in 2009 for preventable dental problems.¹

75%



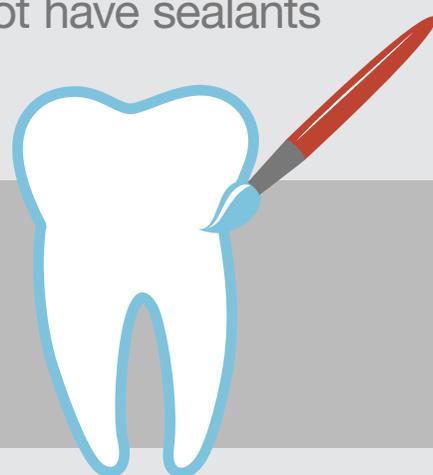
Percentage of poor children ages 6-9 who did not have sealants in 2009-10.²

\$1 =
SPENT ON
SEALANTS



Savings from reduced need for fillings and other dental treatments, Colorado health officials estimate.³

60%



Average drop in decay of molars for up to five years after a sealant is applied.⁴

35+DC



Number of states that do not have sealant programs in most of their high-need schools.

19+DC



Number of states that still impose unnecessary barriers to dental hygienists applying sealants.

45



Years of research supporting the effectiveness of sealants.⁵

¹ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), "Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) – The Nationwide Emergency Department Sample for the year 2009." AHRQ, Rockville, MD. <http://hcupnet.ahrq.gov/>, accessed April 23, 2012. The Pew Children's Dental Campaign identified preventable dental conditions using the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9) codes of 521 and 522. One of these codes was listed as a primary code for the patient's medical problem.

² Poor is defined as below the federal poverty line. Dye, B. A., Li, X., & Thornton-Evans, G. (2012). Oral Health Disparities as Determined by Selected Healthy People 2020 Oral Health Objectives for the United States, 2009-2010. NCHS Data Brief (104).

³ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. (2005). Impact of Oral Disease on the Health of Coloradans, pp 22. Retrieved March 6, 2012, from <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/oralhealth/impact.pdf>.

⁴ Truman, B. I., Gooch, B. F., Sulemana, I., Gift, H. C., Horowitz, A. M., Evans, C. A., et al. (2002). "Reviews of evidence on interventions to prevent dental caries, oral and pharyngeal cancers, and sports-related craniofacial injuries." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 23(1 Suppl), 21-54.

⁵ National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. "Leadership and Legacy: Oral Health Milestones in Maternal and Child Health." Retrieved April 26, 2012, from <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/milestones/1967.html>.