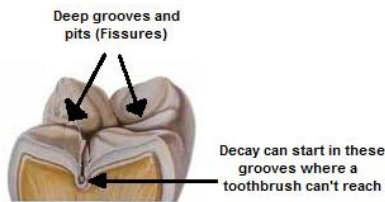


Fissure Sealants

The pits and fissures (grooves) within a tooth are more susceptible to decay development than other sites of the tooth. This places a much greater importance in diagnosing the decay that begins on the biting surfaces of our teeth where decay-causing bacteria can easily be trapped.



These grooves can be found in all teeth, with teeth closer to the back of our mouth usually having deeper grooves than others. Not only do the grooves trap plaque, the back of the mouth is much harder to clean and your toothbrush bristles may not penetrate these grooves effectively. Not being able to clean the grooves effectively means the tooth is at a higher risk of having plaque left behind which causes decay.

Conventional methods of detection involve visual detection and probing the surface of the tooth for soft decay or sticky areas. Decay on the biting surfaces is hard to detect both visually and on x-rays until it is too late. Therefore early detection can help minimise the destruction that decay can cause to a tooth.

To combat this, the resin sealant (fissure seals) was introduced. A resin sealant is a very flowable filling material that can fill in the grooves of back teeth preventing plaque being trapped. No or minimal drilling is necessary. This makes the surface of the tooth smoother and easier to clean with a toothbrush.

Fissure sealants have been found to be extremely successful and cost-effective in preventing early decay in back teeth. Even if these sealants are lost or worn, minimal tooth structure has been affected and the sealant can be replaced with ease. Studies have also shown that although some sealants appear lost, some material is retained deep within the grooves preventing decay.

What is fissure sealing?



First the dentist will clean out the grooves of the teeth, usually with a mild acid etch gel



The sealant is then flowed into the clean grooves



The sealant is then hardened with a light for 20secs



The tooth surface is now smooth and easy to clean minimising the risk of decay

CarieScan Unit



At Cannon Hill Dental we also utilise the use of a CarieScan Detection Unit. This is the most accurate method for the early detection of caries in select patients with susceptible fissure patterns. It is shown to be 94.8% accurate in detecting positively the decay in deep grooves of teeth. It can measure the carious state of teeth early enough to start preventative treatment.