Resin Sealant Retention Tips

What is an “average” sealant retention rate over time?

12 Months (Permanent molars in school age children) 75%-85%

Expect about 10% additional loss per year.

Do light cured sealants have better retention than self curing?

No, both are retained at the same rates.

What will affect sealant retention?

Most important: Isolation

Tooth preparation techniques, use of bonding agents, and self vs light cured may have little effect on retention.

Should sealant retention rates be higher for sealants placed in a dental clinic than in sealants placed in a mobile setting (such as a school program)?

No, retention rates should be the same

If my 12 month retention rate on 1st molars is less than 75%, what can improve retention?

- Check your equipment. Moisture or oil coming through the lines may cause contamination
- Check your isolation techniques: Keeping the tooth dry is the most critical factor for sealant retention
- Check your tooth preparation techniques: Using cleaning techniques such as polishing with pumice or cleaning with hydrogen peroxide may reduce retention. Cleaning the tooth with a wet toothbrush to remove debris is all that is needed.
- Consider using a suction/bite block/isolation system. Several isolation systems combine suction with isolation, thereby keeping the tooth dryer with less chance of contamination.

Contact your Area Dental Officer or Dental Support Center for more information about how to determine your sealant retention rates and how you can improve retention.

Nashville Area Dental Support Center
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