Seal out tooth decay

Even if you brush, floss, rinse with fluoride, and never eat a sticky sweet, decay–causing bacteria can invade the tiny pits and crevices in your molars, or chewing teeth.

To head off that kind of decay, dental sealants are an effective way to prevent cavities for many years, especially on the back teeth where most cavities occur. Sealants are thin coatings painted on the chewing surfaces of teeth that form a protective barrier from bacteria that cause cavities.

Children and adults can benefit from sealants, but children likely benefit the most. It's best to apply sealant to permanent molars which break through around age 12. If you have cavity-prone teeth as an adult, ask your dentist or dental hygienist about sealants the next time you have a dental checkup.

The procedure is simple, pain-free, and won't interfere with later dental work. Sealed teeth may need to be touched up periodically, though.