



Providing Dental Services in Schools...

Easier than you may think!

Myths and Facts



Insist on dental sealants – proven to prevent dental decay!

Dental sealants are plastic coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of molars that prevent dental decay. When combined with appropriate use of fluorides, dental sealants can virtually eradicate dental decay, the most prevalent dental disease!

Myth

Too much time is lost when taking students out of the classroom for school-based dental care.

Fact

More time is lost when students miss school because of toothaches. An estimated 51 million school hours per year are lost due to dental-related illness. Overall, children with good oral health spend more time in school learning.

Myth

It is too costly to provide dental services in schools.

Fact

The Illinois Department of Public Health's **Dental Sealant Grant Program** provides grant funds to local communities throughout the state to implement school-based dental sealant programs. Illinois dental service providers, community dentists and dental hygienists provide preventive services **at no cost to your school**. A value cannot be placed on the averted dental disease, or the pain and suffering of a child with oral disease.

Myth

Dental equipment takes up too much space in the schools and takes a long time for dental staff to set up.

Fact

Portable dental equipment can be set up in a school gymnasium, library, classroom corner or a hallway if necessary. It takes approximately 45 to 60 minutes to set up equipment and supplies and approximately 30 to 45 minutes to disassemble and pack up.

Myth

Students are apprehensive about receiving dental care in a school setting, especially when parents are not present.

Fact

Students actually do very well when receiving school-based dental services. Students tend to find dental care less threatening when they observe their classmates receiving care.

Myth

School-based dental services are second rate.

Fact

Quality care is priority with school-based services. **The Dental Sealant Grant Program** requires rigorous standards for quality assurance through grantee performance reviews, audits and sealant retention rate standards.

Myth

It is the responsibility of the parent, not the school, to ensure that children have good oral health.

Fact

Unfortunately, many parents cannot afford or access dental care. Schools can help children receive necessary preventive care in order to stay healthy.

Myth

Dental sealants don't make a big difference in a child's oral health status.

Fact

Dental sealants are effective in preventing dental decay. School-based dental sealant programs have been shown to reduce dental decay on the chewing surfaces of back teeth by 60 percent over a five-year period. They are 100 percent effective when fully retained.

***Reminder - Illinois law now requires all children in kindergarten, second and sixth grades to have a dental examination. Utilizing school-based services may be a viable way to help your students fulfill this requirement.**