

Caries

CASE CHALLENGE - SEALANTS

Outcome of preventive counselling

The patient did not seem motivated to control the cariogenic dietary factors, despite the long-term dental consequences being explained.

She agreed to try to replace the soft drinks with artificially sweetened drinks, and to limit sweets. Because of concern about motivation to change cariogenic factors, it was recommended that the patient have occlusal sealants placed on all of the premolars and molars. The fluoride mouthwash was also upgraded to a 1.23% Neutral NaF gel for weekly self application. A 5000ppm F toothpaste became available and was also recommended for daily use.

The patient agreed to the recommended measures and all conservative treatment was completed.

■ *The use of sealants had contributed to the overall protection of patient's teeth during the increased caries risk period.*

Six month monitoring visit

The patient had successfully changed to only drinking artificially sweetened soft drinks, but her intake of sweet snacks did not change. She was unwilling to further modify her diet. The patient reported consistently following the recommended fluoride regime. All the restorations and sealants remained intact. She agreed to a further six month review.

Twelve month monitoring visit

Little change had occurred. Because of the continuing cariogenic diet, it was recommended that a further set of bitewing radiographs be taken. Fortunately, these did not show any new caries. The patient was again counselled about the need to reduce dietary carbohydrates, but she insisted she enjoys eating sweet things and would continue to use additional fluorides to protect her teeth. The patient was not keen to continue the six monthly review appointments, therefore further appointments were not organised.

Despite the lack of enthusiasm shown by the patient for further visits, her clinical notes were marked to receive 12-monthly recall cards.

Further information

can be obtained from the
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PATIENT'S DETAILS:

A 19-year-old female, who has not visited a dentist since leaving school at 17. The patient complains of sharp pain on cold or sweet food or beverage in the upper right quadrant.

Medical history

- No major relevant medical problems.
- Currently not taking any medications.

Oral Examination

- Caries deep into dentine in 35.
- No obvious caries in remaining teeth, though some doubtful occlusal surfaces on remaining premolars.

- Bitewing radiographs were taken and showed early occlusal caries just into dentine in 15, 34, 45, with very early interproximal caries on 35 mesial.
- Fissure sealants were present on most of the molar teeth. Some of them were found to be fully or partially lost. All of them were placed by dental therapists through the School Dental Service.
- Gingival condition good.
- Oral hygiene appears very good.
- Salivary flow normal.

Fluoride exposure

- Uses fluoridated toothpaste twice a day.
- Had twelve monthly topical fluoride treatments at the school dental service until age 17.
- Unclear history of taking fluoride tablets.

Figure 1
Patient's caries chart



