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**02 February 2021**

**Deputy Holly Cairns  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2**

**PQ 3176/21: To ask the Minister for Health if HSE funded fissure seal treatments are offered to all children through the school dental programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

The HSE Dental Services have a preventive ethos, and seek to minimise the likelihood of dental disease, including dental decay (caries) from developing. Preventive measures include modification of risk factors including dietary intake of cariogenic foods and drinks, effective use of fluorides including fluoridated toothpaste, and professional interventions such as fissure sealants. HSE Dental Services are provided free of charge.

Fissure sealants are adhesive resins that bond to tooth enamel and are placed using a non-invasive technique. They offer protection from dental caries in the fissures or grooves on the biting surfaces of molar and premolar permanent teeth. The decision by a dentist to offer any item of treatment to a patient is based on the capacity to benefit from the intervention.

With regard to offering fissure sealants as a preventive treatment a number of factors are considered, including the condition of the fissures, assessment of risk that caries will develop, and the patient's ability to co-operate with the placement of the sealant which involves creating a very dry field. The placement of fissure sealants requires informed consent, in the case of children this is discussed with the child's parents.

Fissure sealants are therefore a preventive treatment modality which is offered when appropriate by HSE dental services. The extent of provision of fissure sealants in each HSE dental area depends on the level of service available.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but if you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

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**Joseph Green  
AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations**