



Glass Ionomer (GI) Sealants and Restorations: Materials: “What to Use and When”

Why are glass ionomers (GI) being recommended?

Improvements in GI (better esthetics and more fluoride release) have been substantial and GI can be applied in moist situations with good bond strength. These improvements are very helpful in our young high-risk patients.

Which GI products are best for sealants?

An auto-cured GI is the only true glass ionomer. For example, from GC America, you could use either Triage or Fuji IX Extra.

When should I use GI instead of resin sealants?

Resin sealants are the standard of care. If you can maintain a dry field, use a resin sealant. GI sealants are indicated for high-risk children when proper isolation is not possible. GI sealants are also useful on partially erupted molars.

Which GI products are best for Interim Therapeutic Restorations (ITRs)?

You can use the same materials for GI sealants and ITR.

Does it matter if I use auto or light-cured GI products?

Auto-cured GI products have the highest fluoride-release and are probably your best material for ITRs on high-risk children, but light-cured resin-modified GI products are stronger and may be easier to use with some children, depending on the clinical case.

Experiment with a range of true GI products and resin-modified GI products until you find the products that work best for various clinical situations.

Interim Therapeutic Restorations (ITR) are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the IHS DOH for the purpose of caries stabilization.

Interim Therapeutic Restoration (ITR) Technique

Should I use the pink tinted GI for children?

This depends on the intent of the sealant or restoration. If you intend the procedure to be permanent, you can use the white GI. Some dentists prefer pink to announce that the GI procedure is intended to be temporary and all decay was not removed. This is personal preference. If you use the pink GI, be sure to call them “Barbie” or “Spiderman” fillings. Kids love them!

When should they be replaced? Can I apply new GI on top of the old?

You’ll have to use your professional judgment on this one, but yes, you can apply new GI over the old, without further disturbing the base of the lesion. While we consider ITRs temporary, they often last the life of the primary teeth.

Do I need to use the conditioner?

Refer to the package insert for the GI product and follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

Should I put a coat of Vaseline over ITRs?

A coating prevents overhydration and dehydration of the GI— a manufacturer’s clear coat is optional but a very thin layer of Vaseline will also be effective. Refer to the package insert of the material you are using and follow their recommendations.

How do I code an ITR?

Use Code D2940 to code an interim therapeutic restoration (ITR). If the decay is only in enamel, code it as a sealant—D1351. If the intent is a permanent restoration, use the D2300 series.

What is the IHS ECC Initiative?

The Indian Health Service (IHS) Early Childhood Caries (ECC) Initiative is a multi-faceted program designed to enhance knowledge about ECC prevention and early intervention among not only dental providers, but also healthcare providers, community partners, and AI/AN families. To learn more about ITRs, take the Caries Stabilization online course which is located on the IHS Dental Portal-ECC webpage at <http://www.doh.ihs.gov/ecc>. You will find a link to the course under “Caries Stabilization.”



Together, we CAN make a difference!