

Oral health care tips for PCPs

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends every child see a dental provider by the eruption of the first tooth or their first birthday.

Medical providers, including PCPs, play a vital role in helping members maintain good oral health.

How PCPs can help



- ♥ Educate parents and guardians that most oral diseases can be prevented.
- ♥ Explain that baby teeth are vital to proper speech and chewing functions, and they have the same risk of developing disease.
- ♥ Apply fluoride varnish to all pediatric patients during well-child visits.
- ♥ Refer members to a dentist and remind them there is no cost for checkups, cleanings and most treatments.

Use this guide from **America's Pediatric Dentists** for additional resources.

Fluoride treatments for children during PCP visits



Fluoride varnish is an oral treatment that can help strengthen enamel to prevent, delay or stop tooth decay. Fluoride varnish treatments can be offered during well-child visits by PCPS, physician assistants or nurse practitioners.

Training is required for reimbursement. Illinois medical providers should complete the Illinois Bright Smiles from Birth fluoride varnish program Or, visit **smilesforlifeoralhealth.org** and complete Courses 2 and 6. Print the certificate and/or complete the attestation form as proof of training. Retain for record review. Get more information on training and reimbursement from the **Illinois Department of Public Health**.

The fluoride varnish is also reported for EPSDT. Be sure to fully code on claims for reimbursement and capture.



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Dental sealants



Dental sealants are a thin protective barrier for the back teeth that reduce the risk of cavity development.

Dental sealants can be applied during a routine oral health visit with a dental practitioner. They are a covered benefit if the child has not previously received the treatment.

Oral health care during pregnancy



Good oral health is important for expectant mothers as well as their babies. Here are some points to review with expectant mothers:

- ♥ Dental checkups and cleanings are safe for an expectant mother.
- ♥ Cavity-causing oral bacteria can be passed from mothers to babies.
- ♥ Hormonal changes during pregnancy can increase the risk for gum disease.
- ♥ Routine oral health care reduces the risk of early delivery and low birth weight and improves overall oral and physical health for expectant mothers.



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