

Vision Screening

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

C&TC Requirements

General

Vision screening is a required component for C&TC visits.

- Perform a vision risk assessment and a physical exam of the eye on *all* children.
- Distance visual acuity screening is required *beginning at age 3 years*.
- Near visual acuity (plus lens) screening is required *beginning at 5 years* for children who pass the distance screening and do not have corrective lenses.

Personnel

Vision screening may be performed by trained clinic personnel such as nurses and medical assistants. A licensed health care provider: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) must interpret the results, perform a physical exam and ensure appropriate follow-up.

Documentation

Document physical exam findings and visual acuity screening results. If visual acuity screening is not completed, state the reason using the [screening exceptions](#) (www.dhs.state.mn.us) in the Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) Provider Manual.

For documentation examples, refer to the [C&TC Documentation Forms for Providers and Clinics](#) (www.dhs.state.mn.us).

Procedure

Physical Exam

Physical exam of the eye includes observation for proper eye alignment, extra ocular movements; red reflex; symmetric pupillary reflex; and nystagmus.

Risk Assessment

The initial C&TC visit, at any age, includes a review of the following: parental concerns, familial ocular and vision abnormalities, pre- and postnatal infections and conditions such as prematurity or syndromes. Review and update the history at each subsequent visit.

Visual Acuity Screening

Refer to [Vision Screening Procedures](#) (www.health.state.mn.us) for procedure details and pass criteria.

Distance Visual Acuity

For ages *3-5 years*, perform visual acuity screening using HOTV or LEA SYMBOLS® wall or flip charts (with rectangle borders around each line) at a 10-foot distance. Wall charts are the gold standard for distance visual acuity screening. Instrument-based screening is an alternative for children 3-5 years of age who are unable to perform standard vision screening.

For ages *6 years and older*, perform visual acuity screening using a Sloan wall chart at 10-foot distance.

Near Visual Acuity (Plus Lens)

For children 5 years of age and older who pass distance visual acuity screening and do not have corrective lenses, perform near visual

acuity screening using the same chart and 10-foot distance, with 2.50 plus lenses.

Importance of Vision Screening

Amblyopia is reduced visual acuity associated with risk factors that interfere with normal binocular vision (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2011). Early identification of amblyopia prevents lifelong, uncorrectable vision problems.

Professional Recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Vision risk assessment begins at birth and continues throughout childhood. Visual acuity screening should begin at 3 years (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017).
- Once children can easily read an eye chart, optotype-based acuity should supplement instrument-based vision testing (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017).

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

- Vision screening is recommended at least once for all children between 3 to 5 years of age (Chou, Dana, & Bougatsos, 2011).
- Instrument-based vision screening is recognized as an alternative method for screening children ages 3 to 5 years (Chou, Dana, & Bougatsos, 2011).

Vision Screening Mandate

[Minnesota Statute §121A.17 \(www.revisor.mn.gov\)](#) requires all children to receive vision screening between 3 to 5 years of age, before public school kindergarten entry.

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(www.dhs.state.mn.us\)](#)

- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(www.dhs.state.mn.us\)](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(www.health.state.mn.us\)](#)

Other Resources

- [American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus \(AAPOS\) \(www.aapos.org\)](#)
- [National Center for Children's Vision & Eye Health \(https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org\)](#)
- [National Eye Institute \(www.nei.nih.gov\)](#)

References

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2017, February). *Recommendations for preventive Pediatric Health Care*. Retrieved from Bright Futures: https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/periodicity_schedule.pdf

Chou, R., Dana, T., & Bougatsos, C. (2011). Screening for Visual Impairment in Children Ages 1-5 Years: Update for the USPSTF. *Pediatrics*, 127(2), e442-e479.

United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2011). Vision Screening for Children 1 to 5 Years of Age: Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *Pediatrics*, 341-346.

For More Information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3760 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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