

Mental Health Screening (6-20 Years)

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

Mental health screening is required for ages 12-20 and recommended for ages 6-11. Referrals and follow up are critical for any identified concerns.

C&TC standards

General

Mental health surveillance is required at all C&TC visits for all ages. This includes obtaining the child and family's mental health history and the child's history of exposure to trauma.

Mental health screening using an approved, standardized instrument is recommended for all C&TC visits from ages 6 through 11 and is required for ages 12 through 20.

In addition to the required mental health screening, providers may choose to do a suicide risk screening. Refer to the [Suicide Risk Screening C&TC Fact Sheet](#).

Personnel

Screening personnel qualifications are instrument-specific; refer to each instrument's instruction manual for more information.

A licensed health care provider must complete mental health surveillance: 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.

Documentation

Document surveillance in the C&TC visit record. Document screening with the name of the instrument, score, and anticipatory guidance given to the parent/caregiver or youth based on screening results. For positive results, document the referral and follow-up plan.

Refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](#) for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

Procedure

Refer to the [detailed comparison table of approved mental health screening instruments](#) for mental health and depression screening tools. The PHQ-2 may also be used when followed by a more robust validated screener (e.g., PHQ-9) for positive results.

Referral

It is critical that children with identified concerns receive or be referred for specialized services (Weitzman & Wegner, 2015). Refer to the [map of school-linked behavioral health services in Minnesota](#) or search for statewide mental health or substance use disorder treatment agencies using [Fast Tracker](#).

The [Psychiatric Assistance Line](#) 855-431-6468 is a free service available to any health care provider for mental health triage and referral or consultation with a Board-Certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist.

Indicate a referral with the appropriate HIPAA-compliant referral code on the claim.

Follow-up

After making a referral, ensure the services were obtained and effective. Provide more frequent C&TC or other follow-up visits as needed.

Importance of mental health screening

Primary care providers care for children and youth with a wide range of mental health concerns. Some have concerns that do not meet the criteria for a mental health disorder. Screening for mental health risk factors and linking to community and mental health resources benefits childcare, school, social interactions (Earls & Flower, 2024).

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Standardized depression and suicide risk screening is recommended at all well-child checks beginning at 12 years (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2025).

United States Preventive Services Task Force

Screening for major depressive disorder is recommended at 12-18 years and for

anxiety at 8-18 years (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2022; United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2022). Screening for depression and anxiety is recommended in adults 19 years and older (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2023; United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2023).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)
- [Children's Mental Health Programs and Services](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Mental Well-Being for Kids](#)
- [Mental Health Promotion](#)
- [Minnesota Pediatric Mental Health Access Program](#)

Other resources

- [Adolescent Health](#)

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 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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Resource links

- [Suicide Risk Screening C&TC Fact Sheet \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childyouth/ctc/suiscreen.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childyouth/ctc/suiscreen.pdf)
- [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms \(https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/)
- [Detailed comparison table of approved mental health screening instruments \(https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/comparison-table-mh-screening-instruments_tcm1053-322730.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/comparison-table-mh-screening-instruments_tcm1053-322730.pdf)
- [Map of school-linked behavioral health services across Minnesota \(https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/childrens-mental-health/school-linked-bh-services/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/childrens-mental-health/school-linked-bh-services/)
- [Fast Tracker \(https://fasttrackermn.org/\)](https://fasttrackermn.org/)
- [Psychiatric Assistance Line \(https://www.mnpsychconsult.com/\)](https://www.mnpsychconsult.com/)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG\)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs_16_150092\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs_16_150092)
- [Children's Mental Health Programs and Services \(https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/health-care/mental-health/programs-services/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/health-care/mental-health/programs-services/)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childyouth/ctc/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childyouth/ctc/index.html)
- [Mental Well-Being for Kids \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/mentalhealth/quickcardkids.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/mentalhealth/quickcardkids.pdf)

- [Mental Health Promotion \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth)
- [Suicide Prevention \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html)
- [Minnesota Pediatric Mental Health Access Program \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childyouth/cyshn/pedmenthlth.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childyouth/cyshn/pedmenthlth.html)
- [Adolescent Health \(https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health/\)](https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health/)
- [Screening for Suicide Risk in Clinical Practice \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/strategies-for-clinical-settings-for-youth-suicide-prevention/screening-for-suicide-risk-in-clinical-practice/\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/strategies-for-clinical-settings-for-youth-suicide-prevention/screening-for-suicide-risk-in-clinical-practice/)

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2025, February). *Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care*. Retrieved from https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf
- Earls, M., & Flower, K. (2024). Mental health is a part of checkups. *Contemporary Pediatrics*.
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2022). Depression and Suicide Risk in Children and Adolescents: Screening. *JAMA*.
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2022). Screening for Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*.
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2023). Screening for Anxiety Disorders in Adults: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*.
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2023). Screening for Depression and Suicide Risk in Adults: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*.
- Weitzman, C., & Wegner, L. (2015). Promoting Optimal Development: Screening for Behavioral and Emotional Problems. *Pediatrics*, 135(2), 385-395.