

Oral Health and Fluoride Varnish

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

As part of the physical exam, lift the lips and inspect the teeth and soft tissues of the mouth. Fluoride varnish application (FVA) is required at every C&TC visit between the eruption of the first tooth and age 5. Refer to a dental home at each visit.

C&TC standards

General

Provide the following components as required at every C&TC visit:

- A thorough assessment of the dentition and oral soft tissues as part of the physical exam.
- Anticipatory guidance on caries prevention and regular preventive dental care.
- FVA at every C&TC visit from the eruption of the first tooth through 5 years and for older children based on risk factors.
- Verbal referral to a dental home at every C&TC visit from the eruption of the first tooth or no later than 12 months of age.

Personnel

Physical exam components, anticipatory guidance, FVA, and verbal referral to a dentist must be provided by a licensed health care provider: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or by a registered nurse or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

FVA may also be applied by trained clinic staff under supervision of the licensed health care provider.

Documentation

Document required components, including verbal or written consent for FVA or the reason it was not applied. Refer to the [Minnesota Health Care Providers Manual Screening Exceptions](#).

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

Procedure

As part of the physical exam

Lift the lips and include a thorough inspection of the teeth and soft tissues of the mouth as part of the routine physical exam.

Anticipatory guidance

Provide targeted anticipatory guidance on decreasing caries risk with counseling focused on diet and oral hygiene (Krol & Whelan, 2023).

Fluoride varnish application

For information and training, refer to [Fluoride Varnish in the C&TC Setting](#).

Additional recommendations

Oral health risk assessment

Refer to the [American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Risk Assessment Tool](#).

Dental sealants

Refer children to a dentist when permanent molars erupt (Griffin, et al., 2014).

Importance of preventive oral health care

Dental caries affect over 40% of children aged 2 to 19, many of whom struggle to access dental care (Krol & Whelan, 2023). Primary care providers can make a difference by educating families about caries' cause and risk factors and offering guidance on nutrition and oral hygiene.

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Minnesota children who drink primarily well or other non-public water system water may not be ingesting adequate fluoride. In such a case, the physician will recommend water testing ([Fluoride](#)) to determine the concentration of fluoride in a child's primary drinking water. If levels of fluoride are not adequate, systemic fluoride supplements can be prescribed (Clark, Keels, Slayton, & Section on Oral Health, 2020).

United States Preventive Services Task Force

Primary care clinics should provide FVA to the primary teeth of all children, beginning when their first tooth erupts through 5 years (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2021).

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

Children should visit the dentist every six months beginning at the eruption of the first tooth (Griffin, et al., 2014).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

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

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby.](#)

Other resources

- [Oral Health](#)
- [Oral Health Tips for Children](#)

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

- [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)
- [Fluoride Varnish in the C&TC Setting \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreynouth/ctc/fluoridevarnish.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreynouth/ctc/fluoridevarnish.html)
- [Caries Risk Assessment and Management for Infants, Children and Adolescents \(www.aapd.org/media/policies_guidelines/g_cariesriskassessment.pdf\)](http://www.aapd.org/media/policies_guidelines/g_cariesriskassessment.pdf)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Risk Assessment Tool \(https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/oralhealth_RiskAssessmentTool.pdf\)](https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/oralhealth_RiskAssessmentTool.pdf)
- [Fluoride \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/samproc/fluoridescp.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/samproc/fluoridescp.pdf)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-3379-ENG\)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
- [Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/oralhealth/programs/healthybaby.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/oralhealth/programs/healthybaby.html)
- [Oral Health \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/oral-health/\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/oral-health/)
- [Oral Health Tips for Children \(https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/prevention/oral-health-tips-for-children.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/prevention/oral-health-tips-for-children.html)

References

- Clark, M., Keels, M. A., Slayton, R., & Section on Oral Health. (2020). Fluoride Use in Caries Prevention in the Primary Care Setting. *American Academy of Pediatrics*. doi:10.1542/peds.2020-034637
- Griffin, S. O., Barker, L. K., Wei, L., Li, C.-H., Albuquerque, M. S., & Gooch, B. F. (2014). Use of Dental Care and Effective Preventive Services in Preventing Tooth Decay Among U.S. Children and Adolescents. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 63(2), 54-60. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6302a9.htm
- Krol, D., & Whelan, K. (2023). Maintaining and Improving the Oral Health of Young Children. *Pediatrics*, 151(1). doi:10.1542/peds.2022-060417
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2021). *Prevention of Dental Caries in Children Younger Than 5 Years: Screening and Interventions*. Retrieved from www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/prevention-of-dental-caries-in-children-younger-than-age-5-years-screening-and-interventions1