

Suicide Risk Screening

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

Early identification of at-risk individuals allows for timely support, treatment, and intervention, which can lower suicide risk. Suicide risk screening is recommended for all youth at each C&TC visit for ages 12-20 years.

C&TC standards

General

Suicide risk screening is recommended for all youth at each C&TC visit for ages 12 through 20 years.

For general mental health screening, refer to [Mental Health Screening Fact Sheet](#).

Personnel

A nurse, medical assistant, or another staff member may ask the suicide risk screening questions if the patient is unable to complete the form independently. A licensed health care provider must review and interpret the screening: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or a registered or public health nurse (RN or PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health. If indicated, a trained clinician must perform a brief suicide safety assessment (BSSA) to determine the appropriate next steps (Hua, Lee, Rahmandar, & Sigel, 2024).

Documentation

Refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](#) for documentation examples or to

use as a template with your electronic medical record.

Procedure

Before initiating suicide risk screening:

1. Develop relationships with mental health providers in your community, such as mental health clinics and your county crisis team.
2. If you complete suicide risk screening, be prepared to do a BSSA for youth who are detected to be at risk (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2023).

Screen youth confidentially. Explain that anything discussed will remain confidential unless someone's immediate safety is at risk. Refer to [Talking About Suicide Risk with Patients and Families](#).

Appropriate suicide risk screening tools include:

- Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ)
- Suicide Behavior Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R)
- Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale
- Patient Health Questionnaire – 9 Adolescent Version (PHQ-9A)
- Patient Safety Screener – 3 (PSS-3)

Refer to [Screening for Suicide Risk in Clinical Practice](#).

Youth who screen positive will need a BSSA, which must be conducted by a trained clinician (Hua, Lee, Rahmandar, & Sigel, 2024). Commonly used BSSA tools include:

- Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) – Full Version
- ASQ BSSA
- Suicide Assessment Five-Step Evaluation and Triage (SAFE-T)

Refer to [Conducting a Brief Suicide Safety Assessment](#).

Importance of suicide risk screening

Suicide risk screening identifies additional cases of suicide risk that are not identified by depression screening (Kemper, Hostutler, Beck, Fontanella, & Bridge, 2021). Suicide risk screening does not increase the risk of suicidal behavior (DeCou & Schumann, 2018). Young people might keep these thoughts to themselves unless they are directly asked about them.

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Screen all youth aged 12 years and older for suicide risk at least annually (Hua, Lee, Rahmandar, & Sigel, 2024).

United States Preventive Services Task Force

Current evidence is insufficient to recommend suicide risk screening for children, adolescents, and adults (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](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Suicide Prevention](#)

Other resources

- [Suicide: Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Ask Suicide-Screening Questions \(ASQ\) Toolkit](#)
- [The Columbia Lighthouse Project](#)
- [Preventing Suicide](#)

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

- [Mental Health Screening Fact Sheet \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childreyouth/ctc/mentalhealth.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childreyouth/ctc/mentalhealth.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/)
- [Talking About Suicide Risk with Patients and Families \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/talking-about-suicide-risk-with-patients-and-families/\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/talking-about-suicide-risk-with-patients-and-families/)
- [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/)
- [Conducting a Brief Suicide Safety Assessment \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/strategies-for-clinical-settings-for-youth-suicide-prevention/conducting-a-brief-suicide-safety-assessment/\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/strategies-for-clinical-settings-for-youth-suicide-prevention/conducting-a-brief-suicide-safety-assessment/)
- [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 \(http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?ldcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&revisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=dhs16_150092\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?ldcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&revisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=dhs16_150092)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreyouth/ctc/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreyouth/ctc/index.html)
- [Suicide Prevention \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html)

- [Suicide: Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention)
- [Suicide Prevention \(https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/suicidal-behavior/prevention\)](https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/suicidal-behavior/prevention)
- [Ask Suicide-Screening Questions \(ASQ\) Toolkit \(https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials\)](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials)
- [The Columbia Lighthouse Project \(https://cssrs.columbia.edu/\)](https://cssrs.columbia.edu/)
- [Preventing Suicide \(https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/prevention/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/prevention/)

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2023). *Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention*. Retrieved from American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/strategies-for-clinical-settings-for-youth-suicide-prevention/>
- DeCou, C., & Schumann, M. (2018). On the Iatrogenic Risk of Assessing Suicidality: A Meta-Analysis. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 513-543.
- Hua, L., Lee, J., Rahmandar, M., & Sigel, E. (2024). Suicide and Suicide Risk in Adolescents. *Pediatrics*.
- Kemper, A., Hostutler, C., Beck, K., Fontanella, C., & Bridge, J. (2021). Depression and Suicide-Risk Screening Results in Pediatric Primary Care. *Pediatrics*.
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2023). Screening for Depression and Suicide Risk in Adults: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*.
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2023). Screening for Depression and Suicide Risk in Children and Adolescents: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*.