

## Oral Health Risk Assessment, Education, Varnish Application, Referral Policy

**PURPOSE:** To assess oral health risk, educate parents, apply fluoride varnish, and refer children for dental care, to aid in the prevention of dental caries in children from 6 mos to 5 yrs. of age.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all staff of (organization name)

**RESPONSIBILITY:** It is the responsibility of the staff at (organization name) to facilitate the implementation of this policy.

### **POLICIES:**

- It is within the scope of practice of the pediatrician, family physician, certified nurse practitioner, registered nurse, or physician assistant to do an oral health risk assessment during a physical examination, educate families, to apply fluoride dental varnish to the teeth to aid in the prevention of dental caries up to 4 times a year, and to refer children for dental care by 12 months of age.
- Written parental consent is NOT required as this is considered routine medical practice.
- Because a large number of our patients fall into a moderate or high risk category for dental caries – e.g. sugary beverages/drink juice throughout the day and/or continue nighttime bottles as a cultural practice, fluoride varnish application will be made available to all patients in the practice regardless of income level.
- Where possible, insurance reimbursement will be sought for the application of fluoride varnish—both supplies and professional components.
- Up to 4 times per year to age 20 for PA Medicaid patients and to age 6 for commercial pay patients.
  - An oral health risk assessment will be done on all children as part of their check up visit.
  - Fluoride dental varnish will be applied with parent verbal consent at the 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, 30, and 36, 48 and 60-month check-up visits and at ill visits in between if a child is at risk of signs of early childhood caries are found unless it has been applied within the previous month.
  - Parents will be educated in oral health preventative measures, the need to seek dental care for their child, and what they should expect from a dentist.
  - Parents will receive a list of available dentists who provide quality care and accept their insurance, and will be encouraged to schedule an appointment with one of them.
  - At any time that oral health pathology is found, clinicians will personally connect the family with an appropriate dentist by phone to expedite their care.
- Clinicians will continuously update a list (kept in [location] ) of dentists who are willing and able to render optimal dental care to children for our parents.

### **SUPPLIES:**

- Oral Health Risk Assessment Form (or a version thereof) – in EHR or paper
- Dental varnish kit containing

- 5% NaF (0.25, 0.4, or 0.5 ml) in xylitol with applicator brush
- Non-sterile nitrile gloves
- Parent information sheet
- Place in Zippered plastic bag
- Optional:
  - Dental mirror or tongue blade
  - Light source (headlamp) not needed if otoscope is used

**PROCEDURE:**

- Work from above or in front of the head of the child.
- A knee to knee position with the practitioner and parent, with parent holding the child, lying the child back toward the practitioner’s lap – or performing the examination during the physical exam – whichever is comfortable for the practitioner and patient, will be used.
- Lip is lifted gently with finger and upper and lower teeth are examined.
- A thin layer of varnish is applied to all surfaces of the teeth with gloved hands with the applicator in the varnish kits.
- Varnish should be applied to white spots (Early Childhood Caries) and to early caries but may be painful if applied on large open cavities where there may be pulp involvement.
- Dispose of gloves and remainder of varnish kit.
- Caution parents to have child eat a soft non-abrasive diet for the rest of the day and not to brush or floss until the next morning.
- Give the parent an information sheet in their language.

**CHARTING:**

Record risk assessment, education, and varnish application in (**procedure location**) entitled “Fluoride Varnish Application”.

**BILLING:**

This procedure will be billed with code 99188 – Fluoride Varnish application – and includes Oral Health Risk Assessment, Family Education, Varnish Application, and Dental Referral for PA Medicaid billing (their definition) and only Fluoride Varnish for private insurance billing (CPT description). There is no RVU designated because the procedure is not done for Medicare patients and the RVUs are only set for Medicare procedures.