

Pediatricians Can Help Prevent Cavities With Fluoride Varnish

When parents think about their children's teeth, they think the only place they can get care and guidance is from their family dentist. Although the dentist is the most knowledgeable about caring for and keeping children's teeth healthy, pediatricians also play an important role on the oral care team. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics has asked pediatricians to address their patients' oral health and since 2014, the United States Preventive Task Force has recommended that pediatricians and other primary care providers apply fluoride varnish to the teeth of all children under the age of 6. This recommendation allows pediatricians to get paid through health insurance coverage without cost-sharing. In addition, all Medicaid programs now pay pediatricians to apply fluoride varnish. If you aren't currently offering this service in your office, you should reconsider.

Applying varnish and counseling parents can be done by pediatricians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, and RN and LPN nurses reinforced by the pediatricians using a knee-to-knee evaluation. Your reimbursement rate is \$20.79. Use CPT code 99188 and ICD-10 code Z41.8 when billing Medicaid or insurers. Medicaid will only reimburse for a total of six applications per child (every six months), from age 6 months to age 3. Medicaid will not reimburse on or after the child's third birthday. Varnish billing is done in the same manner as other medical procedures.

Contributed by

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For more information on pediatricians and oral health, visit the links below

Resources for Parents on Oral Health and Fluoride Varnish

- Healthychildren.org Oral Health - <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living/oral-health/pages/default.aspx>
- AAP Campaign for Dental Health – www.ilikemyteeth.org

Resources for Pediatricians on Oral Health and Fluoride Varnish

- AAP Oral Health Initiatives <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Oral-Health/Pages/Oral-Health.aspx>
- AAP Section on Oral Health - <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/Committees-Councils-Sections/Oral-Health/Pages/Oral-Health.aspx>

Resources Specific to Virginia

- DentaQuest-<http://dentaquest.com/state-plans/regions/virginia/>
- Smiles For Children/Dept. of Medical Assistance-http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_pgs/dental-home.aspx
- Virginia Oral Health Coalition-<http://www.vaoralhealth.org/>
- Virginia Dept. of Health-<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oral-health/>