

Medical Consultations

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Pediatric dentists provide comprehensive oral health care for children beginning with eruption of the first tooth and continuing until the transition to adult care with a general dentist. An important part of this pediatric population includes children with special health care needs (SHCN). The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry defines SHCN as including any physical, developmental, mental, sensory, behavioral, cognitive, or emotional impairment or limiting condition that requires medical management, health care intervention, and/or use of specialized services or programs. As pediatricians are aware, these children require individualized care and the dental providers that treat them require coordination with their medical providers to ensure the safety and appropriateness of dental treatment rendered.

In this regard, medical consultations by dentists are necessary for reasons including:

- 1) Patients may have complicated medical conditions that require treatment modification
- 2) Legal guardians may be unreliable reporters of medical history, unable to verify or explain the medical diagnosis, current medications, and previous surgical history, or may omit certain parts of the medical history because they do not believe they need to report this information to the dentist
- 3) Consultations inform the patient's primary care medical provider of the dental treatment the patient will be receiving

Although there is a need for medical consultations, dentists sometimes encounter problems related to:

- 1) The submission of unnecessary consultation requests for medical conditions that could be managed appropriately and safely in the office based on existing recognized guidelines and best practices (such as the American Heart Association recommendations for prevention of infective endocarditis)

- 2) Requesting medical clearance instead of medical consultation
- 3) Providing vague or inadequate information on consultation form

In addition to problems that dentists create with inappropriate medical consultation requests, we also receive responses from physicians that are vague, questions that were asked are not specifically answered, or no response is received other than the attachment of a copy of the last visit's progress notes.

With an increasing demand for medical consultations, there is a need to establish good interprofessional relationships between pediatricians and pediatric dentists which minimize office routine disruption and facilitate medically-necessary communication. To aid in this effort, the Google form link below is placed to request your feedback on how you would prefer to receive medical consultations from your dental colleagues. The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry appreciates any feedback and looks forward to maintaining long-lasting relationships.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdLDOFJmzfr4NghQcBH0LiXYLqVOiEYuUhc65eO7LgJDgUrtw/viewform>