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Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Medical Protocol and Periodicity Schedule (the Medical Schedule) and EPSDT Dental Protocol and Periodicity Schedule (the Dental Schedule)

The Medical Schedule

The EPSDT Medical Protocol and Periodicity Schedule (the Medical Schedule) consists of screening procedures arranged according to the intervals or age levels at which each procedure should be provided. See [130 CMR 450.140 through 450.150](#) for more information about Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) services and Preventive Pediatric Healthcare Screening and Diagnosis (PPHSD) services. This schedule reflects recommended well and preventive child health care screening services. If the clinical needs of a child justify deviation from this schedule, the provider must document this fact in the member's medical record, including the provider's clinical judgment and justification for that deviation.

The Medical Schedule reflects guidance from several sources, including, but not limited to:

- The United States [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).
- The [Bright Futures Guidelines](#) and the [Bright Futures/American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Periodicity Schedule](#). The Periodicity Schedule presents recommendations for each age-related visit in the Bright Futures Guidelines, including recommendations for screenings, assessments, physical exams, and procedures. The Periodicity Schedule is updated between editions of the Bright Futures Guidelines.
- [The Massachusetts Health Quality Partners \(MHQP\) Pediatric Preventive Care Guidelines](#). MHQP is an independent, nonprofit organization that includes health care providers, payers, and patients in Massachusetts with the goal of improving patient care in the state of Massachusetts.

Frequency of Pediatric Preventive Health Care Visits

Pediatric preventive health care visits should contain the parts explained in the descriptions in the Medical Schedule and, at a minimum, occur at the following ages:

- newborn;
- three to five days;
 - newborns sent home from the hospital **fewer than 48 hours after delivery** should be evaluated within 48 hours of discharge;
 - newborns sent home from the hospital **48 hours or more after delivery** should be evaluated within 48 to 72 hours after discharge;
- by one month;
- two, four, six, and nine months;
- 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30 months; and
- annually from three to 21 years.

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Components of Pediatric Preventive Health Care Visits

History

Health histories should be taken at each preventive health care visit. Typically, an initial health history taken at a member's first visit with a provider is more comprehensive than health histories taken during later preventive health care visits.

Visit history may be obtained according to the concerns of the family and the health care professional's preference or style of practice. History that is relevant to the age-specific health supervision visit is gathered to assess strengths, accomplish surveillance, and enhance the health care professional's understanding of the child and family. Past medical history and pertinent family history are important elements of the initial and interval history. Some visits also include relevant social history questions.

Health histories should include age-appropriate history about the member, including but not limited to:

- family history;
- birth, growth, nutrition, and developmental history;
- immunization history;
- current and past medications, including any alternative or complementary medicine;
- medication allergies and other allergies;
- medical history, including previous diagnoses, surgeries, and hospitalizations;
- review of systems;
- risk-taking behaviors, including alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, opiate, and other substance use;
- sexual health and development, including sexual activity; and
- other medical, psychosocial, and behavioral health concerns.

Measurements

- a) **Length/Height and Weight** – Providers should get length/height and weight measurements for children ages birth to 21 years at every preventive health care visit and plot them using appropriate, standard growth charts such as those available [through the CDC](#).
- b) **Head Circumference** – Providers should get head circumference measurements at every preventive health care visit from ages newborn to 24 months and plot them using appropriate, standard growth charts such as those available [through the CDC](#).
- c) **Weight for Length** – Provider should plot weight for length using appropriate, standard growth charts such as those available [through the CDC](#) at every preventive health care visit from ages newborn to 18 months.
- d) **Body Mass Index (BMI) Screen for Obesity** - BMI should be plotted using appropriate, standard growth charts such as those available [through the CDC](#) or calculated at every preventive health care visit from ages 24 months to 20 years. Use the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) growth charts for monitoring weight in children ages one to two years.

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- e) **Blood Pressure** - Blood pressure measurement should be done at every preventive visit starting at age three. For infants and children with certain chronic conditions (including obesity, sleep-disordered breathing, and those born preterm), blood pressure measurement should be done at preventive visits before age three.

Sensory Screening

a) Vision Screening

- **For ages 0 to one years old:**
 - Assess newborn before being sent home or at least by age two weeks using red reflex.
 - Evaluate fixation preference, alignment, and eye disease by age six months.
- **For ages one to 18 years old:**
 - Perform visual acuity test at ages 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, and 18 years. Document in the medical record if the test is performed in another setting such as a school.
 - Screen for strabismus between ages three and five years.

b) Hearing Screening

- **For newborns:** Confirm initial screen was completed, verify results, and follow up, as appropriate.
- **For ages three-to-five days to three months:** Verify results of newborn hearing screening, and follow up, as appropriate.
- **For ages four months to three years:** Perform risk assessment for hearing problems at each preventive visit.
- **For ages four to 10 years:** Perform hearing screening at ages 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 years.
- **For ages 11 to 21 years:** Screen with audiometry including 6,000 and 8,000 Hz high frequencies once between 11 and 14 years, once between 15 and 17 years, and once between 18 and 21 years.

Developmental/Behavioral Health

a) Psychosocial and Behavioral Assessment

Psychosocial and behavioral health assessment should occur at every preventive health care visit, including initial and periodic visits, from birth to 21 years old. In performing psychosocial and behavioral health screening, providers should use one of the clinically and age-appropriate screening tools listed in the Bright Futures Toolkit at www.publications.aap.org/toolkits/resources/15625.

Each preventive health care visit should include screening for health-related social needs such as food insecurity, exposure to intimate partner(s) or community violence, caregiver substance use, housing instability, and other matters that may impact child and family wellbeing. If there is evidence of a psychosocial or behavioral health concern or need for further assessment, the provider should offer the necessary behavioral health services or make a referral to another provider who can provide them. Providers must refer the child to the local

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Early Intervention Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health if they are ages 0 to 30 months, and to the local public school system if they are older than 30 months. The Early Intervention Program, the local public school, or both will conduct assessments to determine eligibility and service needs. To determine which providers may be available to provide the needed behavioral health services and how to use out-of-network providers, if necessary, contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at (800) 841-2900, TDD/TTY: 711 or the member's health plan.

Providers may also contact the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program (www.mcpap.com) for pediatric psychiatric consultation and referral for ongoing behavioral health care.

b) Postpartum or Caregiver Depression Screening and Referral

Screening the child's parent(s) or caregiver(s), including paternal, adoptive, and non-birthing caregivers, for postpartum or caregiver depression should occur at every pediatric preventive health care visit from the one month visit to the 12-month visit. MassHealth pays for every postpartum or caregiver depression screening that occurs during this period without any limitations on frequency, as clinically appropriate. Providers should use a standardized screening tool such as the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale (EPDS) or any of the recommended screening tools listed in the Bright Futures Toolkit under maternal depression at www.publications.aap.org/toolkits/resources/15625w.

For those who have a positive screen for depression, providers should discuss available potential treatments for postpartum depression or major depressive disorder, including pharmacological treatments, and provide a referral to a mental health clinician, as clinically appropriate.

For emergency or crisis concerns, providers and patients may call the [Massachusetts Behavioral Health Hotline](http://www.mass.gov/find-a-cbhc) at (833)-773-2445 to talk to a trained mental health professional for real-time clinical assessment and to access community mental health resources such as mobile crisis evaluation and referral to a Community Behavioral Health Center for evaluation and ongoing care. To find a Community Behavioral Health Center, go to www.mass.gov/find-a-cbhc.

For non-emergency concerns, providers may contact the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program for Moms (MCPAP for Moms) at www.mcpapformoms.org for consultation from a perinatal mental health professional and referral to perinatal mental health services or other supports. Other resources include the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (www.mchb.hrsa.gov/programs-impact/national-maternal-mental-health-hotline), or Postpartum Support International of Massachusetts (www.psichapters.com/ma). Providers should help coordinate follow-up care as appropriate and pediatric providers should encourage the infant caregiver to follow up with their own health care provider.

c) Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening

Screening using an autism-specific tool should occur at the 18-month and 24-month preventive health care visits. Providers should choose one of the standardized Autism screening tools listed

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in the Bright Futures Toolkit at www.publications.aap.org/toolkits/resources/15625.

In addition to the Autism screeners listed for the 18-month and 2-year-old (24-month) visit, additional Autism screeners can be found in the Child Development section within [AAP “Developmental Screening Tools” table](#) (found in Supplemental Information).

d) Developmental Screening

Ongoing surveillance is supplemented and strengthened by standardized developmental screening tests that are recommended to be used at 9, 18, and 30 months but may also be applied at any visit at which developmental surveillance elicits a concern. Providers should choose one of the age-appropriate standardized developmental screening tools in the Bright Futures Toolkit at www.publications.aap.org/toolkits/resources/15625.

If concerns are identified, refer the child to the local Early Intervention Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health if they are age 0 to 30 months, and to the local public school system if they are above age 30 months. The Early Intervention Program, the local public school, or both will conduct assessments to determine eligibility and service needs.

e) Developmental Surveillance

Developmental surveillance should occur at each preventive health care visit from newborn to age 21 except at visits when developmental screening is being done. Comprehensive child development surveillance may include:

- eliciting and attending to the parents’ concerns;
- maintaining a developmental history;
- making accurate and informed observations of the child;
- identifying the presence of risk and protective factors;
- periodically using screening tests; and
- documenting the process and findings.

f) Depression Screening

Screening for depression should occur at every preventive health care visit from ages 12 to 21 years using a standardized depression screening tool such as the Patient Health Questionnaire Modified for Adolescents (PHQ-9 Modified), or other tools available in the Guidelines for Adolescent Depression in Primary Care (GLAD-PC) toolkit.

Providers who identify a concern may contact the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program (www.mcpap.com) for pediatric psychiatric consultation and referral for ongoing behavioral health care.

g) Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Use Assessment

Risk assessment for tobacco, alcohol, and drug use should be performed at every preventive health care visit from ages 11 to 21 years. It is recommended that providers use a standardized substance screening tool from among those listed in Bright Futures. SBIRT is a validated framework for screening and intervening upon substance use in routine clinical encounters. Validated substance-use screening tools that can be used as part of SBIRT include CRAFFT 2.1+N or S2BI. If concerns are identified, providers may contact the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program (www.mcpap.com) to be connected to the Adolescent Substance

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and Addiction Program (ASAP), a program of MCPAP that provides pediatric primary care providers with pediatric substance use disorder consultation.

If a referral to treatment is needed, providers may contact the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline (www.helplinema.org) or the Office of Youth & Young Adult Services at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services at (617) 624-5111.

Physical Exam

A developmentally appropriate physical exam should be performed at every preventive health care visit. Infants should be completely unclothed, and other children undressed, draped, and chaperoned, as indicated. The use of a chaperone should be a shared decision among the patient, the patient's parent or guardian, and physician.

Procedures

a) Newborn Blood Screening

Verify at the newborn or the three- to five-day preventive health care visit that all required newborn screenings were performed, especially if the newborn was not born in a hospital setting or was born outside Massachusetts. Verify results and follow up as appropriate. Additional information about the Massachusetts newborn screening program is available from the New England Newborn Screening Program (www.nensp.umassmed.edu).

b) Newborn Bilirubin Screening

Confirm at the newborn preventive health care visit that the initial screening was completed, verify results, and follow up as appropriate.

c) Critical Congenital Heart Defect Screening

Screening for critical congenital heart defect or disease using pulse oximetry should be performed in newborns, after 24 hours old, before being sent home from the hospital. Confirm at the newborn preventive health care visit that the screening has been done.

d) Immunization Assessment and Administration

Immunize according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Immunization Program. Immunization status should be assessed at every preventive health care visit from newborn to 21 years old.

e) Anemia Screening

- **For ages 0 to one years old:** Screen once between ages nine and 12 months. At clinician discretion, conduct assessment of infants at high risk for iron deficiency. Consider screening at ages 15 and 30 months, based on risk factors.
- **For ages one to 10 years old:** Conduct risk assessment or screening, including dietary iron sufficiency, at clinician discretion. Screen those with risk factors annually from ages two to five.

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- **For ages 11 to 21:** Conduct risk assessment or screening. Screen all non-pregnant female adolescents for anemia every five to 10 years during well visits starting at age 12. Screen those with known risk factors (i.e., excessive menstrual blood loss, low iron intake, or previous diagnosis of iron deficiency anemia) annually.

f) Lead Exposure Screening

Screen for lead exposure according to the guidance set forth by the Massachusetts Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (MCLPPP). As described in the MCLPPP's *Changes to the Lead Regulation for Pediatric Healthcare Providers* updated in October 2017 (www.mass.gov/doc/lead-fact-sheet-for-providers-111417-0/download), initial screening is recommended between nine and 12 months and again at two and three years old. Screen at four years old if a child lives in a city or town with a high risk for childhood lead exposure. Screen at entry to daycare, preschool, or kindergarten if not screened before.

A list of high-risk communities can be found at www.mass.gov/lists/view-annual-screening-and-blood-lead-level-reports-and-high-risk-community-list. Additional information about screening may be found at www.mass.gov/dph/clppp.

Under M.G.L. c. 111, § 191

(www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section191), physicians, other health care providers, and private laboratories must report all known cases of childhood lead poisoning known to the agency director within three working days of identification, unless previously reported. If a child suffers multiple episodes of lead poisoning, the provider must report each episode.

g) Tuberculosis Assessment and Testing

Risk for tuberculosis should be assessed at the one-month and at the six-month, 12-month, and 24-month preventive health care visit and then annually from three to 21 years old. Testing should be performed as indicated by the results of the risk assessment.

h) Dyslipidemia Assessment and Testing

Assess for dyslipidemia risk factors every two years at ages two, four, six, and eight, and then annually from ages 12 to 16. Screen for dyslipidemia once between ages nine and 11, and once between ages 17 and 21.

i) Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) Assessment and Testing

Assess for risk of STIs annually starting at the 11-year preventive health care visit, with screening as indicated by the risk assessment.

j) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Assessment and Testing

Assess for risk of HIV annually starting at the 11-year preventive health care visit, and test as indicated by the results of the risk assessment. Adolescents should be tested at least once between the ages of 15 and 18. Those at increased risk of HIV infection, including those who are sexually active, participate in injection drug use, or are being tested for other STIs, should be tested for HIV and reassessed annually.

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k) Cervical Dysplasia Screening

Cytology screening for cervical cancer should begin at the 21-year preventive health care visit. In compliance with guidance from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, human papillomavirus (HPV) testing is not recommended at age 21

(www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/cervical-cancer-screening).

Oral Health

It is recommended that a dental home is established for a child by no later than 12 months of age. A dental home is the ongoing relationship between a dentist and a patient, including oral health care delivered in a safe, culturally sensitive, individualized, complete, continuous, accessible, compassionate, and patient and family-centered way, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual or gender identity, and family structure. A dental home addresses anticipatory guidance and preventive, acute, and comprehensive oral health care and includes referral to dental specialists when appropriate.

For further details regarding oral health, see the Dental Schedule below.

Basic oral health education (as described in the Anticipatory Guidance section below), fluoride varnish, and fluoride supplementation are three aspects of oral health that are addressed by both primary care providers and dental providers.

a) Fluoride Varnish

Assess the need for fluoride varnish at all preventive visits from 6 months to 5 years old. Once teeth are present, fluoride varnish may be applied to the child every 3 to 6 months in the primary care or dental office.

b) Fluoride Supplementation

Assess the need for dietary fluoride supplementation at 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, and then at all preventive visits from 18 months to 16 years old. Dietary fluoride supplements should be considered for children if their primary water source is lacking in fluoride.

Anticipatory Guidance

Age-appropriate anticipatory guidance should be provided at every preventive health care visit with discussion topics including, but not be limited to:

- developmental expectations and sound parenting practices;
- behavioral risks, such as avoidance of the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, e-cigarettes (also known as vaping), opiates, cannabis, and other substances;
- safe environments at home, in school, and in the community, which are free of violence, toxic stress, bullying, and ostracism;
- mental health, including depression and anxiety, based on risk factors and individual patient presentation in adolescence;
- academic or behavioral problems that may be signs of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD);

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- safe and healthy sexual behaviors, including family planning options, with sensitivity to sexual orientation and gender identity;
- benefits and components of a healthy diet and safe weight management, ways to maintain adequate calcium and vitamin D, and counseling against sugar-sweetened and caffeinated drinks;
- benefits of daily physical activity, opportunities for daily physical activity, and parents as role models;
- healthy sleep habits and encouraging proper sleep amounts and safe sleep practices, including placing infants on their backs when putting them to sleep, avoiding co-sleeping, and use of a firm sleep surface without soft bedding or toys;
- impact of electronic media as a risk factor for being overweight, low school performance, and violent behavior. Encourage limiting screen time. Discourage placement of computers and TVs in bedrooms;
- safety related to online activity, social networking, and use of smartphones and other handheld devices;
- chronic and communicable disease prevention;
- basic oral health education, including the benefits of daily oral hygiene, fluoride, and the benefits of establishing a dental home;
- safety measures and injury prevention, including childproofing, car seats and seat belts, bike and motorcycle helmets, poison prevention, firearm safety, and other age-appropriate counseling;
- skin protection, including using sunscreen, reducing exposure to the sun, and discouraging use of indoor tanning;
- potential risks of body piercing and tattooing;
- nutrition, which primary care providers may assess and promote by doing the following:
 - ask about dietary habits;
 - promote breastfeeding as the optimal form of infant nutrition and assess breastfed infants between two and five days old;
 - starting in middle childhood, screen annually for eating disorders and ask about body image and dieting patterns; and
 - make every effort to inform a possibly eligible member or the parent or guardian about the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, including providing information on the pre-application, which can be found at www.mass.gov/forms/apply-for-wic-online. If eligible, a referral to WIC should be made using the [WIC Medical Referral Form \(MRF\)](#) from the Massachusetts WIC Program. In addition, if eligible, the member, parent, or guardian should also be referred to the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), which is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance.

Medical Schedule Table

The Medical Schedule is included in this table at:

- PDF version- www.mass.gov/doc/epsdt-medical-periodicity-schedule-matrix2024-11-21-0/download
- Accessible Word version- www.mass.gov/doc/epsdt-medical-periodicity-schedule-matrix2024-11-21-0/download

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The Dental Schedule

The EPSDT Dental Protocol and Periodicity Schedule (the Dental Schedule) consists of procedures arranged according to the intervals or age levels at which each procedure is to be provided. The Dental Schedule is based on the *Periodicity of Examination, Preventive Dental Services, Anticipatory Guidance/Counseling, and Oral Treatment for Infants, Children, and Adolescents* from the [American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry \(AAPD\) Reference Manual 2023-2024](#). See [130 CMR 450.140 through 450.150](#) for more information about Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) services and Preventive Pediatric Healthcare Screening and Diagnosis (PPHSD) services. This schedule reflects recommended well and preventive child health care screening services. If the clinical needs of a child justify deviation from this schedule, the provider must document this fact in the member's dental record, including the provider's clinical judgment and justification for that deviation.

Dental Schedule Table

The Dental Schedule is included in the following table. Explanations of each part are included in next section.

Procedure	6 – 12 Months	12 -24 Months	2 - 6 Years	6 - 12 Years	12 - 20 Years
Clinical oral examination ⁽¹⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Assess oral growth and development ⁽²⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Caries-risk assessment ⁽³⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Radiographic assessment ⁽⁴⁾			x	x	x
Prophylaxis and topical fluoride ⁽⁵⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Fluoride supplementation ⁽⁶⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Anticipatory guidance/counseling ⁽⁷⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Oral hygiene counseling ⁽⁸⁾	Parent	Parent	Patient/parent	Patient/parent	Patient
Dietary counseling ⁽⁹⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Counseling for nonnutritive habits ⁽¹⁰⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Injury prevention and safety counseling ⁽¹¹⁾	x	x	x	x	x
Assess speech/language development ⁽¹²⁾	x	x	x		
Assessment developing occlusion ⁽¹³⁾			x	x	x

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Procedure	6 – 12 Months	12 -24 Months	2 - 6 Years	6 - 12 Years	12 - 20 Years
Assessment for pit and fissure sealants ⁽¹⁴⁾			x	x	x
Periodontal-risk assessment ⁽¹⁵⁾			x	x	x
Counseling for tobacco, vaping, and substance misuse ⁽¹⁶⁾				x	x
Counseling for human papilloma virus/vaccine ⁽¹⁷⁾				x	x
Counseling for intraoral/perioral piercing ⁽¹⁸⁾				x	x
Assess third molars ⁽¹⁹⁾					x
Transition to adult dental care ⁽²¹⁾					x

Explanations of the Dental Schedule Table

The explanations in this section are numbered and align with the numbers that appear in the Dental Schedule Table.

1. The first clinical oral exam should occur at the eruption of the first tooth and no later than 12 months old. Clinical exams should take place every six months or as indicated by the child's risk status and susceptibility to disease. The clinical exam includes assessment of all hard and soft tissues, as well as pathology and injuries.
2. Oral growth and development are assessed by clinical exam.
3. Caries risk review should be performed as soon as the first primary tooth erupts to prevent disease by identifying patients at high risk for caries and developing individualized preventive measures and caries management, as well as determining appropriate periodicity of services. Because a child's risk for developing dental disease can change over time due to changes in habits (e.g., diet, home care), oral microflora, or physical condition, risk assessment must be documented and repeated regularly and frequently to maximize effectiveness.
4. Radiographic reviews are an important component of the clinical assessment. Timing, selection, and frequency are determined by child's history, clinical findings, and susceptibility to oral disease and in compliance with ADA/FDA guidelines (www.fda.gov/radiation-emitting-products/medical-x-ray-imaging/selection-patients-dental-radiographic-examinations). Every effort must be made to minimize the patient's radiation exposure by applying best radiological practices and minimizing radiographs only to those necessary to obtain essential diagnostic information and achieve satisfactory diagnosis. Variations from the ADA/FDA clinical guidelines must be documented in the patient record.

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5. Prophylaxis and topical fluoride treatments are important preventive measures that should be a regular part of the periodic exam and assessment process. The interval for frequency of professional preventive services is based upon assessed risk for caries and periodontal disease. Once teeth are present, fluoride varnish may be applied every three to six months in the dental office or primary care setting.
(www.publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/146/6/e2020034637/33536/Fluoride-Use-in-Caries-Prevention-in-the-Primary)
6. Consider fluoride supplementation for children up to at least 16 years of age when systemic fluoride exposure is suboptimal or as otherwise indicated by guidance of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the Bright Futures Periodicity schedule. See list of Massachusetts fluoridated communities at www.mass.gov/info-details/community-water-fluoridation-status.
7. Anticipatory guidance is the process of providing practical and developmentally appropriate information to prepare parents for significant milestones in oral development, teething and tooth eruption, oral hygiene, feeding and eating practices, fluoride, and injury prevention. Individualized discussion and counseling are integral components of each visit.
8. Oral hygiene counseling involves the parents and child. Initially, oral hygiene is the responsibility of the parent. As the child develops, home care can be performed jointly by the parent and child. When a child demonstrates the understanding and ability to perform personal hygiene techniques, age-appropriate instruction should be provided to the child. The effectiveness of home care should be monitored at every visit and includes a discussion on the consistency of daily oral hygiene preventative activities, including adequate fluoride exposure.
9. Dietary counseling is an integral part of every visit. For very young children, this should include a discussion of appropriate feeding practices and prevention of early childhood caries. By age one, the counseling should include the role of refined carbohydrates and frequency of snacking and sugar-sweetened beverages in caries development and childhood obesity.
10. Counseling related to non-nutritive sucking habits should include information about the need for additional sucking (e.g. digits vs. pacifiers). As the child grows, counseling should include the need to wean from the sucking habit before malocclusion or deleterious effect on the dentofacial complex occurs. For school-aged children and adolescent patients, counseling should include any existing habits such as fingernail biting, clenching, or bruxism.
11. Injury prevention counseling should initially include information about play objects, pacifiers, car seats, electrical cords, and secondhand smoke. As the child nears age one, counseling should include learning to walk and routine playing. As motor coordination develops and the child grows older, the parent/patient should be counseled on additional safety and preventive measures, including use of protective equipment (e.g., athletic mouthguards, helmets with face shields) for contact sports and high-speed activities.
12. Observation for age-appropriate speech articulation and fluency as well as receptive and expressive language milestones is crucial for early recognition of potential delays and appropriate referral to therapeutic services.
13. Assessment of developing occlusion should begin in the two- to six-year age range and include identification of: transverse, vertical, and sagittal growth patterns; asymmetry; occlusal disharmonies; functional status including temporomandibular joint dysfunction; and esthetic

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influences on self-image and emotional development. Abnormalities in occlusal development should be recognized, diagnosed, and managed or referred in a timely manner.

14. For caries-susceptible primary molars, permanent molars, premolars, and anterior teeth with deep pits and fissures; dental sealants should be placed as soon as possible after eruption. Sealants are a crucial part of preventive dental care and can minimize the progression of non-cavitated occlusal caries lesions.
15. Periodontal risk assessment identifies individuals at increased risk of developing gingival and periodontal diseases and pathologies and should be repeated during each clinical examination to monitor changes in risk status and to maximize effectiveness. Periodontal probing should be added to the risk-assessment process after the eruption of the first permanent molars and incisors as tolerated by the child. Probing of primary teeth may be indicated when clinical and radiographic findings indicate the presence of periodontal pathology.
16. Education regarding prevention of tobacco use, vaping, and substance misuse should begin as early as age six according to the National Cancer Institute and American Dental Association. When tobacco or substance use has been identified, brief interventions should encourage, support, and positively reinforce avoiding substance use. If indicated, appropriate referrals should be made for assessment and/or treatment of substance use disorders.
17. Human papilloma virus (HPV) is associated with several types of cancers, including oral and oropharyngeal cancers. As adolescent patients tend to see the dentist twice yearly and more often than their medical care provider, this is a window of opportunity for the dental professional to counsel patients and parents about HPV's link to oral cancer and the potential benefits of receiving the HPV vaccine.
18. The oral health consequences of intraoral/perioral piercings should be initiated for the preteen child and parent and reinforced during subsequent periodic visits.
19. During late adolescence, assess the presence, position, and development of third molars, giving consideration to removal when there is a high probability of disease or pathology or the risks associated with early removal are less than the risks of later removal.
20. As adolescent patients approach 21 years of age, educating the patient and parent on the value of transitioning to a dentist who is experienced in adult oral health can help minimize disruption of high-quality, developmentally appropriate health care. At the time agreed upon by the patient, parent, and pediatric dentist, the patient should be referred to a specific practitioner in an environment sensitive to the adolescent's individual needs.