

DocTalk

Dental
Health Services
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Exclusively for Dental Health Services Participating Dentists and Their Staff

Caries Risk Assessment Prevents Your Patients from Tooth Decay

At Dental Health Services, it is our priority to assist you in providing quality preventive dental care for your patients and our plan members. Your continued participation in our network of Quality Assured Dentists is appreciated. You are invited to participate in our caries risk assessment program designed to help your Plan Member patients identify their caries risk that will assist your office in managing their condition. Dental caries is the most common chronic childhood disease--with an estimated 90%



of adults have experienced caries worldwide. Your partnership in this effort is key to the success of this program.

By now, it is common knowledge that the most vulnerable time for teeth is when demineralization occurs. Your role as a dentist is to encourage your patients to incorporate certain actions into their lifestyle to prevent tooth decay. These include good oral hygiene, professional check-ups and cleanings, sealants and fluoride treatments. Many dietary and

nutritional considerations, such as reducing sugar intake, will also help reduce bacterial production.

To address the issue surrounding the strong influence pH plays on caries development and prevention, Dental Health Services has added Plan Benefits to better help your Plan Member Patients.

In addition to any member copayment that might apply, Dental Health Services may additionally pay a supplement based on the member's plan benefit when you submit one of the three caries risk assessment codes from the CDT Dental Procedure Codes guide after using a recognized assessment tool:

- D0601 caries risk assessment with a finding of low risk.
- D0602 caries risk assessment with a finding of moderate risk.
- D0603 caries risk assessment with a finding of high risk.

Simply include the appropriate code with your normal utilization /claim submissions and keep the assessments in your patient's chart. Dental Health Services does not need a copy of the risk management assessment.

Caries detection technology may be any light-induced fluorescence (QLF), fiber-optic trans-illumination (FOTI), infrared laser fluorescence(ILF) and digital imaging fiber-optic trans-illumination (DIFOTI). Help identify members who are at a high, moderate or low risk. Information from these assessments will help us provide educational materials to help your Plan Member Patients get on the path of optimal oral health.

Be specifically mindful of your "High Risk" Patients:

The association between poor oral health and diabetes is well documented. Preventive oral health care is, therefore, strongly indicated for people with diabetes. And cervical caries assessment and preventive plans can go a long way in ensuring better and healthier outcomes in your dental office.

The association of smoking with poor oral health, periodontal disease, and tooth decay is also well documented and make caries assessment programs important diagnostic, educational, and preventive tools. This can also apply to Vaping products that are increasingly being used by adults and the adolescent population.

Additionally, Dentists are now at the forefront of introducing their patients to programs that aid in smoking cessation.

Please look for these ADA Caries Assessment forms in our Online Resources page:



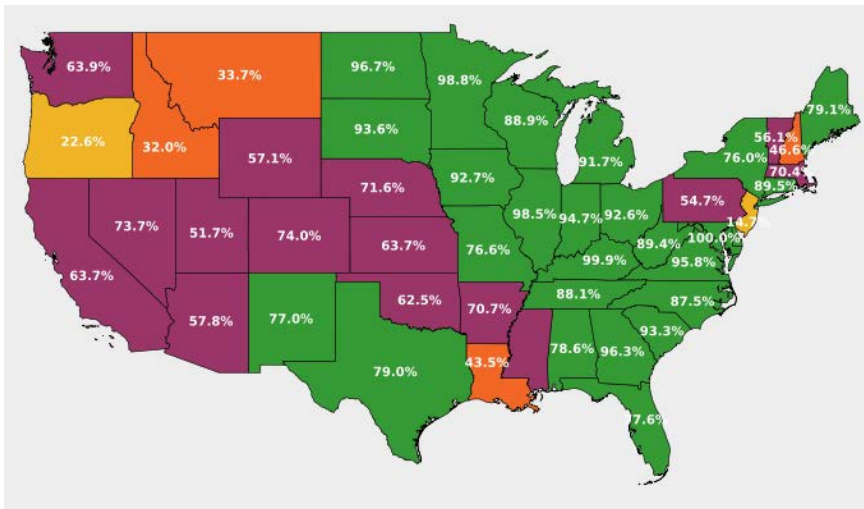
Assessing your adult patients and your pediatric patients for caries can help you formulate a comprehensive care plan in prevention as well as well treatment of caries in a timely fashion.

Patient education is a key component of this plan, and we are here to help your practice and your Plan Member Patients by providing our members periodic educational materials in the form of "ToothTips."

Together, we can encourage your Plan Member Patients to:

- Limit sugar and eliminate sugary beverages such as soda or pop, juice that contains sugar, and punch.
- Drink tap water or milk instead of sugary beverages. Most States have tap water that contains fluoride that prevents cavities.
- Not chew gum that contains sugar.
- Read nutrition labels so you can make food choices that are low in sugar.
- Consume treats like candy, cake, cookies and ice cream, only as treats!
- Eat well-balanced meals consisting of fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, salads, dairy and lean meats and fish as long they have a special diet or are under dietary restrictions.

United States Tap Water Fluoridation Map--Percentages by State--according to ADA Data:



Preventive treatments such as Sealants, Preventive Resin Restorations and in-Office Fluoride Treatments are essential benefits only you, the dentist, can provide. When patients are educated in understanding the benefits of such procedures, they will be more inclined to accept them. As a dentist you are also in a unique position to perhaps identify systemic issues and are an integral part of our Members' general health and well-being.

Preventive Care: A Practice Builder

Having a solid and consistent recall program is an integral part of any successful dental practice. Not only will your Plan Member patients reap the benefits of regular check-ups, cleanings and oral-cancer screenings, regular contact with your established patients gives you the opportunity to re-enforce the doctor-patient relationship. Furthermore, it presents you with the opportunity to encourage satisfied patients to provide you with potential referrals and favorable online reviews.



dentalhealthservices.com
3833 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807
Tel 562-595-6000 | Fax 562-424-0150 | Toll Free 800-223-4347