



**February 11, 2026**

**Nevada Medicaid Web Announcement 3838**

## **Children's Dental Health Month Resources for Primary Care Physicians & Pediatricians**

February is Children's Dental Health Month and a great opportunity to remind you that oral health is an essential part of overall health, and that you are a vital member of the dental team.

From infancy through adolescence, children and youth see their medical providers far more often than they visit a dental office. These visits put you in a unique position to reinforce healthy habits, identify early signs of oral disease, and encourage timely dental visits. When medical and dental professionals work together, families receive consistent, trusted messages that support prevention and lifelong oral health.

To make these conversations easy and realistic during busy well-child visits, we're sharing a few ideas with you to support brief, effective oral health discussions during well-child visits.

We've also included an oral health education handout in English and Spanish, which may be printed for distribution to parents and caregivers without adding burden to your workflow.

By lending your trusted voice, you help normalize oral health as part of total health, and strengthen the team approach, which keeps children smiling, healthy, and thriving.

## Working Together for Healthy Smiles

### Primary Care Providers: Essential Members of the Oral Health Team

Pediatric PCPs play a critical role in protecting children's oral health. During well-child visits, your guidance helps families prevent tooth decay, establish healthy habits early, and connect to ongoing dental care.

#### Why Oral Health Matters

- Tooth decay (cavities) is the **most common chronic disease of childhood** - and it's largely preventable.
- Oral health affects **nutrition and overall health, speech development, learning, and self-confidence.**
- Early dental prevention reduces tooth pain and infection and makes for a **healthier child.**

#### Did you know, in Nevada...

- 54% of young children (ages 3-5) have experienced tooth decay.
- 66% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have experienced tooth decay, and 33% have untreated tooth decay.
- 38% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have dental sealants on their permanent molar teeth to prevent tooth decay.
- Children residing in our rural and frontier communities access regular dental care less frequently.

### Your Role Makes a Difference as their Trusted Healthcare Provider – Your Voice Matters

Physicians are the most frequent and first point of contact for a child and their family. As **their trusted healthcare provider**, your voice matters.

Providing brief oral health guidance during well-child visits -

- Reinforces oral health prevention messages.
- Normalizes early and regular dental care as part of routine health care.
- Builds lifelong healthy habits for children and youth.
- May identify oral/dental health problems early.



#### What You Can Do During a Well-Child Visit

- Discuss the **value of good nutritional choices** - not just for their bodies, but **for their teeth.**
- Ask about **dental visits** – having a dental home is important for continuous care. Infants/toddlers should have their **first dental visit by the age of one.** For children and youth, prevention is the priority and every six-months visits is key.
- Ask about **toothbrushing** – an **adult should be brushing the child's teeth daily** until s/he is 7-8 years of age. Until that time, children just don't have the dexterity or understanding of where and how to brush effectively.
- Children should be **brushing with a fluoride toothpaste.** The AAP recommends using a smear of fluoride toothpaste twice daily until 3 years of age, and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste after the third birthday.
- Ask about and encourage school-age children/youth's participation in a **school sealant program.** Schools across the state are partnering with dental health providers to provide protective sealants and fluoride varnish on molar teeth during school hours.
- When you are examining the child's/youth's throat, **take a glimpse at their teeth, gums, and oral structures.** Are they clean or dirty? Pink/healthy or red with infection? Sound and white teeth or decayed? Discuss the importance of good dental health for general health and wellness.



**Together, we are one team - working to keep children smiling, healthy, and thriving.**

## Growing Healthy Smiles Together

### Dental Health Information from your Child's Primary Care Provider

We care about your child's dental health because it is an essential part of their overall health. By caring for your child's mouth early and regularly, you help protect their smile and support their long-term health and well-being.

#### Start Early

- Toddlers should have their **first dental visit by age 1** or within 6 months of their first tooth erupting.
- Regular dental visits should take place every 6 months – **prevention is key** for a healthy mouth.

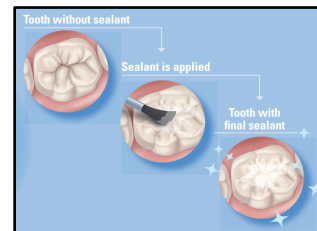
#### Daily Oral Care at Home

- Children should **brush at least twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste**.
  - Rice-sized or smear of toothpaste for children under 3 years of age
  - Pea-sized amount of toothpaste for children 3 years of age and older
- **Parents need to help children brush their teeth** until they're 7-8 years of age.



#### Nutrition & Habits

- Avoid putting babies and toddlers to bed with bottles containing milk or juice, reducing the risk for cavities and the need for expensive dental treatment.
- For older children, **frequency is key** – limit sticky, sugary snacks and sugar drinks including fruit juices and soda.
- **Drinking water** between meals and after snacks is best.



#### School Sealant Programs

- Schools throughout Nevada host oral/dental health programs that come to the school, placing dental sealants and fluoride varnish on molar teeth, **protecting those back teeth from getting cavities**. Ask your child's teacher or school nurse about participating.

## Creciendo Sonrisas Saludables Juntos

### Informacion Sobre la Salud Dental de parte del Proveedor de Atencion Primaria de su Hijo

Nos importa la salud dental de su hijo porque es una parte esencial de su salud general. Al cuidar la boca de su hijo desde temprano y de manera regular, usted ayuda a proteger su sonrisa y a apoyar su salud y bienestar a largo plazo.

#### Comience Temprano

- Los niños pequeños deben tener su primera visita dental antes del primer año de edad o dentro de los 6 meses después de la erupción de su primer diente.
- Las visitas dentales regulares deben realizarse cada 6 meses; la prevención es clave para una boca saludable.

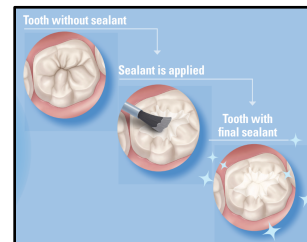
#### Cuidado Oral Diario en Casa

- Los niños deben cepillarse los dientes al menos dos veces al día con pasta dental con flúor.
  - Cantidad del tamaño de un grano de arroz o una capa muy delgada para dental de fluoruro niños menores de tres años.
  - Cantidad del tamaño de un guisante para niños de 3 años en adelante.
- **Los padres deben ayudar a los niños a cepillarse los dientes hasta los 7-8 años de edad.**



#### Nutricion y Habitos

- Evite acostar a los bebés y niños pequeños con biberones que contengan leche o jugo, lo que reduce el riesgo de caries y la necesidad de tratamientos dentales costosos.
- Para los niños mayores, la frecuencia es clave: limite los refrigerios pagajosos y azucaradas, incluidos los jugos de frutas y refrescos.
- Lo mejor es beber agua entre las comidas y los refrigerios.



#### Programas de Selladores Escolares

- Las escuelas de todo Nevada reciben programas de salud oral/dental que visitan al plantel para colocar selladores dentales y barniz de fluor en los molares, ayudando a proteger esas muelas contra las caries. Pregunte al maestro a las enfermeras de la escuela de su hijo sobre como participar.