

# Application of fluoride varnish tip sheet

## Reasons to apply fluoride varnish

- History of dental caries (tooth decay) is an important predictor of risk for future disease
- Children with early childhood decay are more likely to experience further decay in their lifetime. Baby teeth remain in a child's mouth until age 11 or 12
- Tooth decay can go beyond pain and can also affect your child's:
  - Speech
  - Ability to eat
  - Ability to learn
  - Feelings about themselves
- Fluoride varnish helps prevent dental caries and, in some cases, reverse early dental caries. Fluoride can reduce decay by 30-63% if coupled with dental health counseling
- Due to the high efficacy of fluoride varnish, it is now being applied in non-dental settings
- Application of fluoride varnish is quick, easy, painless and can be delegated to nursing and medical assistant staff

## Coding requirements

- Application of topical fluoride varnish by a physician or other health care professional  
CPT code: 99188
- Topical application of fluoride varnish CDT code: D1206

## Best practices

- United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that physicians apply fluoride varnish to the primary teeth of all infants and children starting at the age of primary tooth eruption

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends application of fluoride varnish at least once every 6 months, and preferably every 3 months, starting at tooth eruption