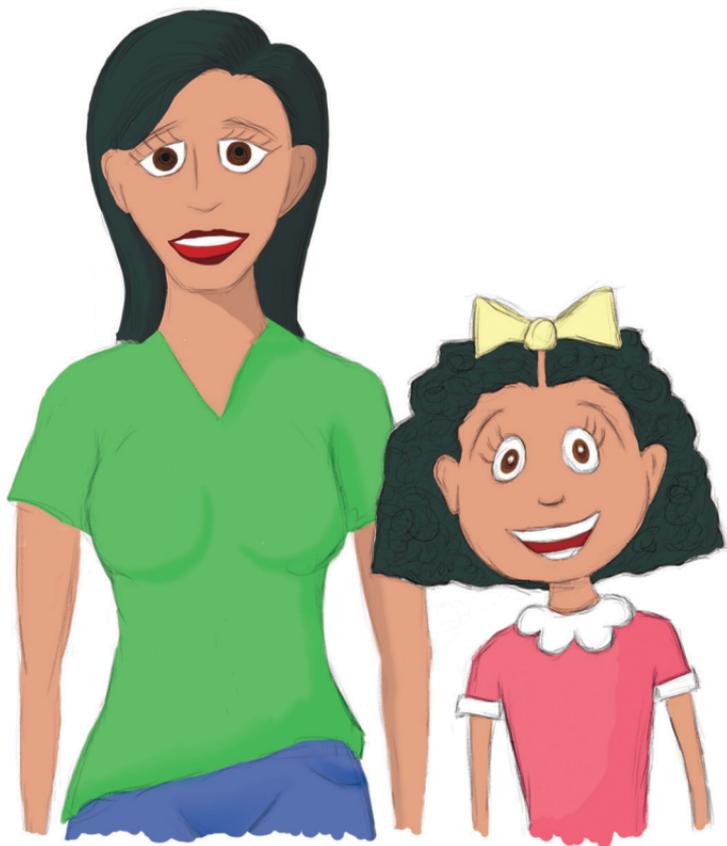


getting the Best Dental Care for Your child



CONTENT SUMMARY

Your child's Medicaid program allows for routine and preventive dental visits each year. These visits help prevent dental problems and provide a chance to catch dental problems early. When your child has teeth that need repair, be sure to talk with the dentist and to ask questions. Discussing the dental treatment plan helps you and the dentist make the right decision for your child.

If you are unsure of the treatment plan or your child had unexplained treatments, ask about it. You can also ask for proof of what services were billed. Improper services could be fraud, and fraud should be reported. Your involvement and knowledge of your child's dental care is positive for all.



GOING TO THE DENTIST

Your child's Medicaid program allows a certain number of routine and preventive dental visits each year. Your child might be looking forward to the visit, or he may be nervous. To make this a positive experience, the dentist will tell you and your child what is to be done for check-ups and for repair work. Dentists work with you and your child to promote healthy teeth.

If something does not seem right, ask questions. If you suspect services are improper, ask the dentist to give you a list of the services provided during the visit. You should report questionable practices or services that are not explained. Improper practices or improperly billed services could be fraud, and fraud is against the law.

GETTING ROUTINE DENTAL CHECK-UPS

Dentists suggest that children have regular check-ups twice a year starting between ages 1 and 3.¹ State Medicaid programs are required to cover routine check-ups for beneficiaries at least to the age of 18.² Each State Medicaid program has rules for how often and when routine dental check-ups are covered. Your Medicaid plan can answer questions about benefits.

I'm Tommy. I'm 5 years old and went to the dentist today. My mommy told me the dentist would count and polish my teeth. Someone took pictures of my teeth and cleaned them. I didn't have any cavities. My dentist said I was good at brushing and flossing my teeth.



Routine dental check-ups include some basic services, such as X-rays and cleanings. On the other hand, repair work can involve more unknown steps.

A PLAN OF CARE

A child may have many dental problems that need repair. Dentists may make decisions due to many factors, including a child's reaction or the actual repair being done. The dentist may plan to get the repair work done in only one visit. Multiple or difficult treatments may need to be done in a hospital setting.

In addition to the plan of care, the dentist will discuss the treatment steps and concerns with you. By knowing the treatment plan and what will and could happen, you can make informed decisions for your child.

Improper Practices

For various reasons, some dentists take part in improper and harmful practices, which can include:

- Providing treatment, such as baby root canals, crowns, or pulling baby teeth, when not needed;³
- Performing fillings on healthy teeth;
- Continuing treatment when the child is wildly crying, screaming, or distressed; and
- Providing services without managing pain.

If you are not sure about a treatment or place of service, speak with the dentist to get more information. You need to understand what the dentist plans to do to repair the teeth and why it needs to be done.

If you suspect that the dentist is not following normal procedures, please report it.

A DENTAL VISIT TO RESTORE TEETH

Your child may not have the same results that Tommy did. He may have cavities and may need fillings or other treatments.

When your child has cavities, the dentist decides what treatment is best. The choices can be confusing and can cause concern. The dentist will develop a treatment plan for each decayed tooth. To restore a tooth, the dentist may:

- Place a filling in the tooth;
- Place a cap or crown on a tooth; and
- Remove a tooth if it cannot be saved.⁴

Listen to the choices given to repair the tooth, and ask questions. You have the right to talk to the dentist if you believe the service is improper.

A TREATMENT PLAN

Six-year-old Tia had a regular check-up that found four teeth with cavities. A back tooth had a large cavity. The dentist planned to place a metal cap on it. Two of the teeth would only need small fillings. A front baby tooth was loose and would not require any fillings.



WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF THE TREATMENT?

I am Tia's mom. The dentist took time to speak with Tia and me before the treatment started. He explained everything and answered our questions. At the end of Tia's visit, the dentist told me what was done and said everything went well. The treatment followed the plan as stated by the dentist.



The dentist numbed two areas of Tia's mouth before repairing her teeth. The dentist explained each step of the treatment to Tia, and a staff member stayed nearby at all times. Tia remained calm, and the treatment followed the plan of care.

REPORTING IMPROPER PRACTICES

If you suspect wrongdoing or that something is not right, report it. For instance, if the treatment your child received by the dentist was different than what you were told would be done, ask about it. Unexplained changes are a cause for concern and could be fraud. You can ask for details of what is billed to Medicaid. Fraud is against the law.

You can fight Medicaid fraud by being alert to improper and suspicious activities. Everyone can help in the mission to stop fraud in Medicaid services. To fight fraud, be observant, ask questions, and report suspicious activities.

When in doubt, check it out!

FRAUD AND MEDICAID ABUSE: HOW DO YOU REPORT IT?

You can also contact your local State Medicaid agency or the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) online at <https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/report-fraud/index.asp> on the HHS-OIG website.

Contact the HHS-OIG by mail, phone, or fax:

Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
ATTN: Hotline
PO Box 23489
Washington, DC 20026

Phone: 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477)

TTY: 1-800-377-4950

Fax: 1-800-223-8164

REFERENCES

1 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (October 2004). “Guide to Children’s Dental Care in Medicaid.” Retrieved May 7, 2012, from <http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Benefits/Downloads/Child-Dental-Guide.pdf>

2 Code of Federal Regulations, 42 C.F.R. § 441.56 (2)(iii). Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) of Individuals Under Age 21—Required Activities. Retrieved April 6, 2012, from <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=72160e0f55d981aa0d48e78ea998e532&ty=HTML&h=L&r=SECTION&n=42y4.0.1.1.10.2.109.3>

3 U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs. (January 20, 2010). “National Dental Management Company Pays \$24 Million to Resolve Fraud Allegations Medically Unnecessary Dental Services Allegedly Performed on Children.” Retrieved December 21, 2011, from <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2010/January/10-civ-052.html>

4 Ibid.



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