
Smiles for Students: Oral Health at School and Home

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Virginia
Health Catalyst
The Intersection of Overall
Health and Oral Health



Virginia Health Catalyst

Ensuring all Virginians have access to equitable, comprehensive health care that includes oral health



Oral Health Impacts Overall Health – In School!

50%

of children who received school-based dental care did not see a dentist in the past year¹

School-based oral health services:

- Lead to further care at the dentist office – a dental home
- Provide an access point to preventive services
 - Fluoride varnish, sealants, x-rays
- Help school performance
 - VA students miss about 1 million hours of school annually due to poor oral health outcomes²

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in childhood³

1. DentaQuest: [Why We Must Preserve School-Based Oral Care for Children](#) (2020)
2. [Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General](#) (2000)
3. CDC Vital Signs: [Dental Sealants Prevent Cavities](#) (2016)



COVID Presents Challenges

Virtual learning

- Students are not in schools to receive care
- Schools are hesitant to provide dental services in the building



Access to care

- Dental offices were closed or emergency only
- Lack of continuation of care
- Fear of going back to the dentist

Students
**missed
2 cycles
of care**
due to
COVID

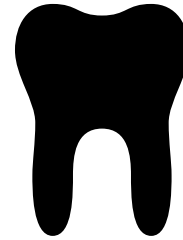


Connecting with Families: Oral Health Tips



Prevention strategies

- Brush your teeth twice a day
- Use toothpaste with fluoride
- Drink water rather than sugary drinks
- Don't smoke or vape
- Replace your toothbrush every 3 months



It is safe to go to the dentist

- Offices and clinics are taking extra safety precautions (PPE, masks, waiting room redesign, temperatures, etc.)
- Try teledentistry



Benefits of Fluoridated Water

- **96% of the population of Virginia** is served by fluoridated water
- Community water fluoridation (CWF) **saves families money** and reduces healthcare costs
- CWF is recommended by many public health, medical, and dental organizations – **AAP, ADA, CDC, WHO²**

Fluoride in water can reduce tooth decay in children and adults by as much as

25%



1. American Dental Association: [5 Reasons Why Fluoride in Water is Good for Communities](#) (2016)
2. CDC: [Community Water Fluoridation](#) (2020)



Dental in Virginia

Dental Providers	Dental Coverage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private practice dentists<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 38% accept Medicaid• Dental safety net<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 69 dental safety net clinics in Virginia• Health department programs<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevention-only/School-based• Mobile clinics• Primary care involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private pay• Traditional dental benefit<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevention services are free• Medicare (65+ or disabled)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No dental benefits• Medicaid and FAMIS (\$17,609/individual; \$36,156/fam of 4)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive dental coverage for children and pregnant women in Virginia• 35 states have a limited dental benefit for adults• Big news in Virginia...



Adult Dental Benefit in Medicaid is in the budget!

Almost 1 million Virginians could have coverage!

- Still waiting for approval from Gov. Northam
- Tentative start date: July 1, 2021
- Catalyst is working with partners statewide to begin planning the benefit implementation

Hesitations with
Medicaid
enrollment

- Public charge rule
- Perceived high cost of service
- Unsure of enrollment process



What School Nurses Can Do?

- Join a workgroup at Virginia Health Catalyst
 - School-Based Workgroup
 - Water Equity Taskforce
- Encourage students and families to see the dentist – it is **safe** and **important**
 - Catalyst has resources to share!
- Connect with a local safety net clinic to set up a school-based dental program at your school
- VDH dental hygienist teams can provide preventive oral health services

1%

of dentists reported having COVID in a recent national survey¹

1. American Dental Association: [ADA study finds COVID-19 rate among dentists less than 1%](#) (2020)



Thank you!

Questions?

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