

# Fluoride Varnish in Your Pediatric Practice: An Effective, Quick, Low-Cost Health Intervention

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in childhood – yet, it’s completely preventable. Poor oral health can inhibit a child’s ability to eat nutritious foods, socialize, and learn in school. Thankfully medical providers and their teams have an easy way to improve oral health through fluoride varnish.

Fluoride varnish is a concentrated dose of fluoride that is painted on the teeth with a small brush; it only takes a few seconds to apply during a well-child visit. It works by rebuilding weakened tooth enamel, making it harder and stronger to prevent further decay. In Virginia, Medicaid reimburses medical providers for applying fluoride varnish.

## WHO CAN APPLY FLUORIDE VARNISH?

Many members of the pediatric team can apply fluoride varnish during well-child visits including:

- Physicians
- Physician assistants
- Nurse practitioners
- Nurses (both RN and LPN)
- Medical assistants - *this is a new change that took effect on July 1, 2020*

## HOW DO I BILL FOR FLUORIDE VARNISH?

Virginia’s Medicaid program and most private insurers will reimburse for fluoride varnish applications. Medicaid will cover up to six applications starting at six months of age through the child’s third birthday. Providers typically apply fluoride varnish every six months along with age-appropriate preventive services. Use the code below to bill Medicaid for fluoride varnish services, and contact private insurance companies for their billing policies.

DIAGNOSIS CODE	PROCEDURE CODE	DESCRIPTION	REIMBURSEMENT
Z29.3 Prophylactic fluoride administration	99188	Topical fluoride varnish, therapeutic application for moderate to high caries risk patients	\$20.79

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT FLUORIDE VARNISH AND ORAL HEALTH?

[Virginia Health Catalyst’s Fluoride Varnish Training Video](#) – Catalyst’s short video shows how fluoride varnish can be applied quickly during a well-child visit.

[Smiles for Life](#) – Find free, online continuing medical education activities that teach oral health skills for your team.

[American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) – The AAP offers programs and resources for physicians and the entire pediatric practice team.

Virginia Health Catalyst can provide in-office fluoride varnish trainings that include information on how to bill Medicaid and integrate oral health into your practice. Contact Samantha Dorr at [sdorr@vahealthcatalyst.org](mailto:sdorr@vahealthcatalyst.org) to schedule a training today.