

Provider Update

Billing changes for fluoride varnish

Summary of change: Effective January 1, 2015, the application of topical fluoride varnish by a physician or other qualified health care professional may bill with the new CPT code 99188.

✦ **What this means to you:** Qualified health care professionals can continue to bill D1206 (topical application of fluoride varnish; therapeutic application for moderate to high caries risk patients) or D1208 (topical application of fluoride [prophylaxis not included] – child; health check and pregnant women). Only two fluoride treatments (two of D1206 or D1208 for children) are reimbursable per member, per calendar year.

Can I also bill for an evaluation and management visit?

Providers may not bill for an evaluation and management visit in addition to billing for the application of fluoride varnish if the sole purpose of the visit was to apply the fluoride varnish. In this instance, the provider may bill for the fluoride varnish code only.

Why should I complete fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish acts to retard, arrest and reverse the caries process. The teeth absorb the fluoride varnish, strengthening the enamel and helping prevent cavities. It is not a substitute for fluoridated water or toothpaste.

Resources

For more information, including the payment rate for this service, please see the *Part II Policies and Procedures Manual for Dental Services*:

- Refer to a dental home, if available. If not available, perform a risk assessment at <http://www2.aap.org/oralhealth/docs/RiskAssessmentTool.pdf>.
- If primary water source is deficient in fluoride, consider oral fluoride supplementation. For those at high risk, consider application of fluoride varnish for caries prevention.
 - See 2008 AAP statement, *Preventive Oral Health Intervention for Pediatrics*, at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/122/6/1387.full>.
 - See 2009 AAP statement, *Oral Health Risk Assessment Timing and Establishment of the Dental Home*, at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/111/5/1113.full>.

What if I need assistance?

If you have questions about this communication, received it in error or need assistance with any other item, contact your local Provider Relations representative or call Provider Services at 1-800-454-3730.

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