

PCPs should assist members to establish a dental home

Effective July 1, 2018, Liberty Dental Plan became the new dental vendor for Amerigroup Community Care. Search for primary care dentists at www.libertydentalplan.com/AmerigroupNJ or contact Liberty Dental Plan at 1-833-276-0848 (TTY 711), Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. for assistance.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Dental caries — or tooth decay — is the most common chronic disease in children in the U.S. Dental caries a silent disease that disproportionately affects poor, young and minority populations.

Although PCPs have the opportunity to provide early assessment of risk for dental caries and anticipatory guidance to prevent disease, it is also important that children establish a dental home.

Here's what you can do:

- Partner with a primary care dentist in the Liberty Dental network for patient referrals.
- Refer your child patients to be seen by a dentist when the first tooth appears and no later than his/her first birthday.
- Complete the AAP Oral Health Risk Assessment Tool for children under age 6 or the ADA Caries Risk Assessment Form for ages 6 and up. Both forms are available at www.libertydentalplan.com/Providers/Provider-Resource-Library.aspx?state=NJ.
- Prescribe a fluoride supplement (drops, tablets or lozenges) to children whose water supply does not have enough fluoride.
- Fluoride varnish applications can be provided in the primary care setting by trained NJ Smiles providers every three-six months or up to four times a year, starting at tooth emergence through age 6. The PCP fluoride varnish application does not constitute a dental visit.
- Discuss risk factors for tooth decay and preventative measures to practice good oral hygiene, seek oral health care, and to prevent transmission of caries-causing bacteria to infants and children
- Educate family members to minimize exposure to natural or refined sugars in foods that can lead to dental caries and to establish lifelong nutritious eating patterns with infants and children.
- Check in with your patient at the next office visit to ensure that they are seeing a primary care dentist on a regular basis.

Dental services coverage:

- Covered services are provided through Liberty Dental Plan and include diagnostic and preventive services (e.g., exams, cleanings and space maintainers) and restorative services.
- Sealants and sealant repairs are covered for bicuspid and permanent molars once every three years for members under age 17 and is covered with Prior Authorization (PA) for members with special health care needs.
- Prior authorization (PA) is required for endodontic, periodontic, prosthodontic services, and oral maxillofacial medical and surgical conditions, including TMJ, and services for trauma of the teeth.
- Dental Implants associated with retaining complete dentures are covered when medically necessary and with PA.

- Orthodontic services are covered when medically necessary through age 18 with PA. Medical necessary conditions include major functional problems such as facial trauma, developmental differences of facial bones and/or oral structures, and long-term physiological health needs.

References:

1. <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Recommends-Fluoride-to-Prevent-Dental-Caries.aspx>
2. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Document/UpdateSummaryFinal/dental-caries-in-children-from-birth-through-age-5-years-screening>
3. https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4_OralHealth.pdf
4. <https://www.libertydentalplan.com/Resources/Documents/AAP%20Oral%20Health%20Risk%20Assessment%20Tool.pdf>