

Indicator C.3. Preventive Services for Children at Elevated Caries Risk, Dental Services	
Description:	Percentage of enrolled children who are at “elevated” risk (i.e., “moderate” or “high”) who received a topical fluoride application and/or sealants within the reporting year. This indicator is a Dental Quality Alliance (DQA) measure .
What data source is used?	Administrative enrollment and claims data are used to calculate this indicator. This indicator can be applied to both public program and commercial (private payer) administrative claims. This indicator is recommended for states to report for their pediatric Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) beneficiaries. Reporting on this indicator may also be possible for children with dental benefits through state health insurance exchanges or children represented in all-payer claims databases.
Who is the target population?	Children under age 21 enrolled in a program (e.g., Medicaid/CHIP) or a dental plan who are at increased risk for dental caries.
How is the indicator measured?	<p>The indicator is expressed as a percentage [numerator/denominator x 100%]:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Numerator: The subset of children in the denominator who received a topical fluoride application and/or sealants as a dental service</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <p>Denominator: Number of children under age 21 who are at “elevated” risk (i.e., “moderate” or “high”) for dental caries</p> </div>
Are any children excluded?	Children who do not qualify for dental benefits should be excluded.
What does this indicator measure and why is it important?	This indicator is a measure of utilization of preventive dental services among children. Dental caries is the most common chronic disease in children in the United States. ⁱ In 2015–2016, 45.8% of children ages 2–19 had dental caries (both treated and untreated), and 13% had untreated caries. ⁱⁱ Identifying caries early is important to reverse the disease process, prevent progression of caries, and reduce the likelihood of future caries. Evidence-based clinical guidelines recommend that sealants should be placed on pits and fissures of children’s primary and permanent teeth ⁱⁱⁱ and that topical fluoride should be applied at least every 3 to 6 months in children at elevated risk for caries. ^{iv}
Are there any limitations to this indicator?	Dental procedure codes do not distinguish between all of the different types of topical fluoride applications; the measure assumes that all modes of professionally applied topical fluoride are equally effective. The measure does not take into account home use of fluoride products. The measure does not exclude children who do not have any permanent molars that can be sealed (e.g., the molars were previously treated or have active decay).
Where can I get more information about Dental Quality Alliance (DQA) measures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The technical specifications for this indicator are available from DQA. • All DQA measures and user guides are available online.

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. [Hygiene-Related Diseases: Dental Caries](#). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

ⁱⁱ Fleming E, Afful J. 2018. [Prevalence of Total and Untreated Dental Caries Among Youth: United States, 2015–2016](#). NCHS Data Brief, no 307. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2018.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wright JT, Crall JJ, Fontana M, Gillette EJ, Nový BB, Dhar V, Donly K, Hewlett ER, Quinonez RB, Chaffin J, Crespín M, Iafolla T, Siegal MD, Tampi MP, Graham L, Estrich C, Carrasco-Labra A. 2016. [Evidence-based clinical practice guideline for the use of pit-and-fissure sealants: A report of the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry](#). *Journal of the American Dental Association* 147(8):672–682.e12.

^{iv} Weyant RJ, Tracy SL, Anselmo TT, Beltrán-Aguilar ED, et al; American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs Expert Panel on Topical Fluoride Caries Preventive Agents. [Topical fluoride for caries prevention: Executive summary of the updated clinical recommendations and supporting systematic review](#). *Journal of the American Dental Association* 2013 Nov;144(11):1279-91.