STATE OF CALIFORNIA

THE PATIENT
ADVOCATE

Health Care Change in California:
What It Means to You
DENTAL CARE FOR CHILDREN

New health care laws can help children get dental care for their teeth, gums, and mouth. Dental care includes prevention and treatment of tooth decay, gum disease, and pain.

▶ Dental health affects children's total health.

Tooth decay can cause serious infections and pain.

- It is the most common chronic disease for young children.

- Tooth decay can cause problems with eating, sleeping, and learning. It is a common cause of children missing school.

- Even baby teeth are very important. They help babies chew, smile, and talk, and they hold the spaces for the adult teeth.

▶ Some preventive dental care is now covered.

Ask if your health plan offers no-cost preventive care. This includes:

- **Fluoride:** Fluoride helps prevent cavities. If your tap water does not have fluoride in it, ask your child's doctor about fluoride supplements.

- **Oral health risk assessment:** Your child's doctor should check your child's oral health, as part of well-baby and well-child check-ups.

Healthy teeth are very important to children's total health. That is why dental care for children will be covered beginning in 2014.

▶ Many more dental care services will be covered in 2014.

Starting in 2014, more health plans will offer dental care as an essential health care benefit for children and teens, up to age 19.

Basic dental care includes services to prevent and treat tooth decay and other problems. In most plans, you will have to pay part of the cost for services.

Basic dental care includes services such as:

- Dental check-ups and cleanings twice a year

- Sealants to protect the permanent molars

- X-rays to diagnose problems

- Fillings for cavities

- Crowns, bridges, and root canals

- Extractions (removing a damaged tooth)

Do any plans cover dental care for children now?

Yes, basic dental care is provided for children and teens enrolled in Medi-Cal.

Some other health plans cover dental care for children. Or you may be able to buy a separate dental plan.

Which dentists can my child go to?

Most health and dental plans have a network or a list of preferred providers. Ask your health or dental plan for this list.

How can I find a plan that covers dental care for my child in 2014?

Many plans in 2014 will cover dental care for children. If your child needs a dental plan, contact Covered California, a health plan marketplace. Visit **CoveredCA.com.**

Consumer Assistance Program

Free help in many languages

1-888-466-2219
HealthHelp.ca.gov

TIPS

Start dental care now.

- Take your child to the dentist every 6 months, starting when the first tooth appears or by age 1.
- Also take your child to the dentist if:
  - You notice any brown or black spots on their teeth.
  - Your child complains of tooth pain.
  - Your child has a tooth injury or other dental problem.

Keep your child's teeth healthy.

- If you can, breastfeed during your baby's first year.
- If you bottlefeed your baby, use only formula or water—no juice or soda.
- Do not let your baby sleep with a bottle.
- Limit juice, sodas, and sugary snacks.

Brush your child's teeth.

- Clean your baby's first teeth with a soft cloth or baby toothbrush.
- Teach your children to brush twice a day, in the morning and before bedtime. Use a pea-sized drop of fluoride toothpaste.
- Help your children brush their teeth until they are 6-8 years old and can do it well themselves.