



# PREVENTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

The Preventive Services Program (PSP) is dedicated to promoting and improving healthy smiles for all Missouri children through education and preventive services.

The program goal is to assess Missouri children's oral health status while implementing a public health intervention designed to dramatically reduce tooth decay.

Have you ever been perplexed as to why a student cannot concentrate on school work? Oral diseases impact student attendance, student performance and self-confidence.

Have you known a student whose toothache kept him or her up all night? Dental decay is an infectious, bacterial disease. Untreated decay can lead to an abscess, extensive infection, tooth loss, or the need for a root canal. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease in children and it is preventable.

The program uses community involvement to implement evidence-based prevention strategies to improve oral health outcomes for school-age children. Community-wide support is essential to the implementation and success of the program.

## State Provides At No Cost

- Oral Health Consultants
- Educational materials
- Screening forms and necessary paperwork
- Disposable mouth mirrors, fluoride varnish, toothbrushes, and other oral health supplies
- Web-based training for volunteers
- Technical assistance support for implementing PSP, such as strategies and tools for volunteer recruitment and event logistics
- A summary report for each school based on screening data

## Community Responsibilities

- Recruit community dental professionals and community volunteers
- Obtain parental consent for dental screenings and fluoride varnish applications
- Order supplies through Oral Health Consultant
- Provide gloves, masks and hand sanitizer for volunteers
- Provide oral health education to children
- Schedule screening and varnish events
- Complete and return paperwork
- Develop referral system with community dentists for children with dental needs

## Benefits of Fluoride

- Strengthens tooth enamel and prevents decay
- Can stop early dental decay

## Fluoride Varnish Characteristics

- Topically applied
- Quickly applied
- Sets on contact with moisture (saliva)
- Easy to learn to apply
- Pleasant taste

## Application of Fluoride Varnish

- No dental chair needed; may be applied in a non-clinical setting
- "Painted" on tooth surfaces with a disposable applicator
- Trained volunteers at least 18 years old can apply fluoride varnish; does not require dental expertise

## Who Benefits From Fluoride Varnish

- Individuals of all ages; however, PSP provides services to children up to age 18

## Post-Application

- Children may eat and drink as usual
- Varnish is brushed away the next morning; effects of fluoride last several months



PSP's **4 Basic Steps**

Promoting *Healthy Smiles*  
through *Education & Prevention*



- 1. Surveillance/Screening**  
Dentists or dental hygienists conduct an annual oral screening. This visual exam detects obvious decay and problems that need intervention. Screening data are compiled for surveillance and program planning.
- 2. Education**  
The program provides basic oral hygiene instruction and education on fluoride varnish benefits. Toothpaste, a toothbrush and floss are also provided.
- 3. Prevention (Fluoride Varnish)**  
Volunteers apply two applications per year.
- 4. Referral**  
The program provides the names of community dentists who can help provide treatment for unmet dental needs. Parents review the list when they are notified of significant findings in their children's oral screenings.



**To learn more about the Preventive Services Program, contact:**

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[health.mo.gov/oralhealth/](http://health.mo.gov/oralhealth/)



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Missouri Department of Health and  
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