

## NHSBSA Dental Services

### In the spotlight Article 6: Children's dentistry November 2019 (Updated March 2023)

This article is intended to raise awareness of preventative treatment in line with current guidelines, to reinforce understanding and to clarify current regulations in order to facilitate claiming in line with the current regulations. Full details of the NHS Regulations can be found in Article 1 of this series '[A course of treatment and examination](#)'.

#### Guidance on Preventative treatment

The primary guidance regarding the actions a dental team should take to ensure patients (both children and adults) receive the appropriate preventative treatment is "Delivering Better Oral Health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention" <sup>(1)</sup> [DBOH]. A summary document is available which the dental team may find useful as it provides a summary of recommended steps to be implemented in order to protect and improve children's oral health.

#### Caries prevention for children

The advice and professional intervention, as recommended in DBOH, to be provided to child patients varies. It is dependent on the individual child's age and caries risk.

In brief the guidance for professional intervention includes (but is not restricted to):

- a) For all children aged 3 to 6 years
  - Apply Fluoride Varnish to teeth two times a year (2.2% NaF<sup>-</sup>), or more often for those giving concern.
  
- b) Children aged from 7 years to young adults
  - Apply Fluoride Varnish to teeth two times a year (2.2% NaF<sup>-</sup>)
  - For those giving concern to their dentist, fissure seal permanent molars with resin sealant, and apply Fluoride Varnish to teeth two or more times a year (2.2% NaF<sup>-</sup>).

For further details the reader is kindly advised to review the full guidelines within DBOH documents.

#### Claiming for fluoride, fissure sealant and sealant restoration

Fluoride varnish application is appropriate to Band 1 treatment.

A 'fissure sealant' is a Band 1 surface application as a primary preventive treatment item.

A fissure sealant should not be confused with the term 'sealant restoration'. A sealant restoration is appropriate to Band 2. A 'fissure sealant' is where fissure sealant alone is used, and is appropriate to Band 1.

A 'sealant restoration' is a filling where tooth tissue has been removed due to caries and restored with composite or glass ionomer and sealed with a fissure sealant.

Bitewing radiographs are usually considered a prerequisite to sealant restorations and diagnosis of treatment need.

As with any Band 1 or Band 2 claim, an examination and completion of planned treatment (that the patient is willing to undergo) is a requirement.

**I wish to apply Fluoride Varnish to a patient using laboratory constructed Fluoride trays. Please clarify what band of treatment is the construction of trays for the application of medicaments like fluoride?**

The schedules in the Dental Charges Regulations <sup>(2, 3)</sup> only describe definitive elements of dental care.

Trays (such as fluoride trays) aren't defined as an item of care in the Dental Charges Regulations, they are effectively a form of tool used to deliver care.

As such, they are not a 'treatment' and no UDA are appropriate with regard to the provision or use of these trays. The UDA is actually credited for the treatment being carried out (such as the application of the fluoride varnish itself).

**Can a practice claim UDAs if they have a dental care professional (DCP) providing Fluoride Varnish to patients?**

An examination would be required as part of the course of treatment claimed. A Dentist, Dental Therapist or Hygienist may provide an examination within their scope of practice, trained, competent and indemnified; and provide a course of treatment, which may include Fluoride Varnish application, and are able to claim for that course of treatment. An examination is not within the scope of practice of a dental nurse. However, assuming a dental nurse is registered at the GDC, perhaps with extra qualifications such as fluoride varnish application or oral hygiene instruction, a nurse can carry out these items of treatment if referred by a Dentist, Dental Therapist or Hygienist. In that instance, the Dentist, Dental Therapist or Hygienist would open a Course of Treatment, provide an examination (and any other necessary treatment) and prescribe for the dental nurse to apply Fluoride Varnish, all within a single course of treatment/claim.

For further information please refer to the "Scope of Practice" guidelines published by the General Dental Council <sup>(4)</sup>. The "Scope of Practice" sets out the actions, procedures and processes that a DCP is permitted to undertake.

#### **References:**

- (1) Delivering Better Oral Health: An evidence-based toolkit for prevention. Department of Health.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention>

- (2) The National Health Service (Dental Charges) Regulations 2005
- (3) The National Health Service (Dental Charges) (Wales) Regulations 2006
- (4) <https://www.gdc-uk.org/standards-guidance/standards-and-guidance/scope-of-practice>