

DENTAL CARIES: PERMANENT TEETH REFERRAL GUIDELINE

HIGH RISK

SUGGESTED EMERGENT CONSULTATION

SYMPTOMS

- Cavitation (advanced disease), including pain/swelling, and possible infection
- Family history or sibling with sign of decay
- Special health care needs



SUGGESTED PREVISIT WORKUP

- Head, Ears, Eyes, Neck and Throat Assessment, which includes oral cavity
- Urgent referral to a dentist
- Ongoing dietary counseling and hygiene instruction
- Ongoing oral health screening

MODERATE RISK

SUGGESTED CONSULTATION OR CO-MANAGEMENT

SYMPTOMS

- White spots or cavities (early stage of disease)
- Enamel defects, or other dental concerns
- Special health care needs



SUGGESTED WORKUP

- Head, Ears, Eyes, Neck and Throat Assessment, which includes oral cavity
- Referral to dental provider within 10-20 days
- Ongoing dietary counseling and hygiene instruction
- Ongoing oral health screening

LOW RISK

SUGGESTED ROUTINE CARE

SYMPTOMS

- Healthy teeth, no decay or other concerns
- No health concerns and following good dental home care
 - Daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste for at least 2 minutes each time
 - Limit juice/sweetened beverages
 - Avoid sticky and/or sugary foods



SUGGESTED WORKUP

- Verify and document last dental care appointment and fluoride varnish in medical record
- Document dental home in medical record
- Ongoing dietary counseling and hygiene instruction
- Ongoing oral health screening

CLINICAL PEARLS

Risk factors:

- Inadequate access to fluoride (including topical)
- Poor oral hygiene
- Frequent access to sugar sweetened beverages, candy and sticky snacks
- Previous caries experience
- Reduced salivary flow
- Infrequent professional dental care
- Other, including eating disorders and orthodontic appliances that make oral hygiene more difficult

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