



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Health



Brush Up on Oral Health

August 2014

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Did You Know?

- You can [subscribe](#) to *Brush Up on Oral Health*. The newsletter will be emailed to you each month.
- You can find [back issues](#) of *Brush Up on Oral Health* on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.

Medicaid and CHIP



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Medicaid is a state-run health insurance program for children from families with low incomes. Many, but not all, state Medicaid programs cover pregnant women, individuals with disabilities, and seniors. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) also is a state-run health insurance program. It is for children from families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but too low to afford private insurance. Undocumented children cannot be enrolled in either program.

This issue of *Brush Up on Oral Health* describes Medicaid and CHIP and explains why the programs are important. It includes strategies Head Start health managers can use to help parents find a dental office or clinic that accepts Medicaid and CHIP. The issue also offers a recipe for a healthy snack that can be made in the Head Start classroom or at home.

The Importance of Medicaid and CHIP

Medicaid and CHIP pay for oral health care for children enrolled in these programs. Dental benefits include teeth cleanings, check-ups, X-rays, fluoride treatments, dental sealants, and

fillings. Select [your state](#) and then “Dental Benefits for Children” to find specific information on insurance benefits. Without these two programs, many children would not receive the oral health care they need.

Helping Parents Find Dental Offices and Clinics that Accept Medicaid and CHIP

Below are strategies for Head Start health managers to help parents find a dental office or clinic in their community that accepts children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP.

- **Develop a relationship with the Medicaid and CHIP dental contact in your state.** These [contacts](#) can answer questions about coverage and identify dental offices and clinics that accept children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. Each state’s Head Start [dental hygienist liaison](#) can also help health managers get in touch with their Medicaid or CHIP dental contact.
- **Partner with organizations in your state.** The state Office of Oral Health, dental association, Head Start association, and oral health coalition can help programs create new and innovative ways to find and access dental offices and clinics that accept children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. For example, through an agreement with the Pennsylvania Head Start Association, each of the seven insurance companies in the state that pay for Medicaid and CHIP services have established liaisons to work with Head Start staff and families on oral-health-related issues. The liaisons conduct outreach to parents and oral health providers, help families access care, and provide case-management services.
- **Show parents how to use the [Find a Dentist for Your Kid](#) search tool.** It can be found on the bottom of the [InsureKidsNow.gov](#) website. The tool identifies dental offices and clinics that accept children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. For each office or clinic, the tool shows if new patients are accepted and the languages spoken. The list is updated every three months to keep the information accurate. Go to [InsureKidsNow.gov](#) to share the widget on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) or embed it on your program’s website.



Find a Dentist for Your Kid

Items with * are required

* Please select a state ?

* Please select a benefit plan ?

Search by address, ZIP code, or ?

Search

Search Share Embed

Cook's Corner: Guacamole Dip

Here's a delicious, healthy snack that children can make as a class project or at home with their families.

Ingredients

2 avocados
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 tomato, chopped
Juice from 1 lime
Salt and pepper to taste



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Directions

1. Cut the avocados in half lengthwise, remove the pit, and scoop the avocado out of each half.
2. In a bowl, mash the avocados with a fork.
3. Stir in the onion, garlic, tomato, and lime juice.
4. Season the mixture with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Chill for ½ hour before serving with baked pita or tortilla chips.

Safety tips: An adult should slice ingredients.

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The National Center on Health welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue, as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to nchinfo@aap.org or call 1-888-227-5125.

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School readiness begins with health!