

EPSDT: Preventive Health Services for Children to Age 21

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The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) administers the NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid program, which meets the health care needs of children. Children under 21 years of age enrolled in NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid are eligible to receive Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) services. EPSDT includes a group of services that are provided during regular "well-child" visits. These visits should be made when the child is not sick so that the health care provider can do a complete physical exam, check development, hearing, vision, provide lead poisoning screening, vaccines, health education, anticipatory guidance, dental inspection and dental referrals. A comprehensive health and developmental history, including physical and mental health assessments, is an essential part of an EPSDT exam. These services are available to children enrolled in NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid at no cost.

By seeing a health care provider on a regular basis for an EPSDT exam, any health problems that may arise can be found, diagnosed and treated early, before they become more serious. Any medically necessary diagnostic and treatment services required to correct or improve a physical or mental health condition identified during an EPSDT exam are covered under the EPSDT services.

Every child should receive one well-child/EPSDT exam when they reach the following ages:

- Newborn
- Under 6 weeks
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- 24 months
- After 24 months the child should have one exam a year.

It is very important to keep children and adolescents current with their vaccinations to protect them from serious illnesses and diseases. It is newly recommended that children 6 months to 5 years of age receive the influenza vaccine annually, along with their caregivers. A vaccine to protect infants from Rotavirus has been recently added to the vaccine schedule and the Meningococcal vaccine is now available to adolescents and

college-aged freshman. An additional new vaccine, the Human Papillomavirus vaccine, is a three-dose series recommended for adolescent girls, however, it should also be provided to young women who have not received it.

Some children require different vaccinations. A primary health care provider can provide guidance on individual specific vaccination needs. The current immunization schedule can be downloaded at www.cdc.gov/nip.

Each well-child/EPSDT exam should include a dental inspection by the primary health care provider. The first oral examination by a dentist is recommended to be performed at 1 year of age. The primary health care provider is required to refer NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid-enrolled children for a comprehensive dental examination annually, beginning at 3 years of age. For NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid-enrolled children and adolescents, preventive dental exams are a covered benefit recommended every six months.

DMAHS strives to improve access to medical care and to assure that quality services are available. Working closely with the managed care organizations and the health care provider community, DMAHS helps families navigate the system so they receive services as needed. We continue to provide information to the community about EPSDT including preventive services available so that we can help keep our community healthy.

If you would like more information about EPSDT call Carol Siminski at (609) 588-7563. For information on how to apply for NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid call 1-800-701-0710 or visit us on line at: www.njfamilycare.org.

Editorial note: Although EPSDT specifically applies to NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid enrolled children, EPSDT services are considered best practice standards for preventive health services for all children regardless of income or health insurance coverage.

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Figure 1 EPSDT: Preventive Health Services for Children to Age 21

