



# 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 program designed to reduce tooth decay.

Have you known a student with a painful toothache? Oral diseases affect student attendance, performance and self-confidence. Dental decay is an infectious, bacterial disease. Untreated decay can lead to an abscess, the need for a root canal or tooth loss. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic **preventable** disease in children.

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

## State Provides at No Cost

- Oral Health Program Consultants (Registered Dental Hygienists).
- Educational materials.
- Screening forms (paper or online) and other necessary paperwork.
- Disposable mouth mirrors, fluoride varnish, toothbrushes, toothpaste and other oral health supplies.
- Web-based training for volunteers.
- Support for implementing PSP, such as strategies and tools for volunteer recruitment and event logistics.
- A follow-up summary report for each school based on screening data collected.

## Community Responsibilities

- Recruit community dentists, dental hygienists and other community volunteers.
- Obtain parental consent for dental screening and fluoride varnish applications.
- Order supplies through Oral Health Program 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 dentist for children with unmet 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 age 18 can apply fluoride varnish; does not require dental skills.

## 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** and **Prevention**

### 1. **Surveillance/Screening**

Dentist or dental hygienists conduct an annual oral screening. This visual exam detects obvious decay and problems that need treatment. Screening data are compiled for surveillance and program planning. Please note that the oral screening is not a comprehensive dental examination.

### 2. **Education**

PSP provides resources for basic oral hygiene instruction and education on fluoride varnish benefits. Toothpaste, a toothbrush and floss (4<sup>th</sup> grade and up) are also provided.

### 3. **Prevention (Fluoride Varnish)**

Volunteers apply two applications per school year.

### 4. **Referral**

The PSP event coordinator (school nurse) can provide the names of local dentists who may be willing to treat unmet dental needs found during the dental screening.



#### Office of Dental Health

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Office of Dental Health  
P.O. Box 570  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570  
573-751-6182 or [oralhealth@health.mo.gov](mailto:oralhealth@health.mo.gov)  
[psp.Health.Mo.Gov](http://psp.Health.Mo.Gov) or [Health.Mo.Gov/oralhealth](http://Health.Mo.Gov/oralhealth)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

An EO/AA employer: Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis. Individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech disability can dial 711 or 1-800-735-2966.

#11178



## Preventive Services Program (PSP)

Missouri Department of  
Health and Senior Services  
Office of Dental Health