

Well-child visits

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has noted a significant decline in well-child visits and subsequent vaccinations and appropriate screenings. For this reason, the AAP developed guidance on the provision of pediatric well-care services via telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance recommends that well-child visits should occur in person whenever possible. AAP notes that well visits for children may be initiated through telehealth, however some elements of the well exam should be completed in person. Providers that have implemented telehealth are encouraged to provide appropriate elements of the well-child exam virtually, followed by a timely in-person visit.¹

Additionally, providers are strongly encouraged to have a process in place to monitor and ensure the in-person component of the well-visit is scheduled and completed. This guidance does not change the current billing guidance for telehealth visits; however, providers should **not** bill for both parts of the exam. The telehealth and secondary in-person visit are considered part of the same well visit exam and may only be billed for once, at the completion of the telehealth component.

Components of well-child visits that may be offered through telehealth include:

- ✓ Visual physical exam
- ✓ Physical development
- ✓ Anticipatory guidance
- ✓ Nutrition counseling
- ✓ Weight assessment
- ✓ Exercise counseling
- ✓ Health history
- ✓ Mental development
- ✓ Developmental screening
- ✓ ACEs screening
- ✓ Age-appropriate SHA/IHEBA

Components of well-child visits completed in-person may include:

- ✓ Anthropometric measurements
- ✓ Office or laboratory testing
- ✓ Hearing, vision, and oral health screening
- ✓ Fluoride varnish application
- ✓ Immunizations²

¹ See the AAP Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care During Covid-19, available at the following link: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/guidance-on-providing-pediatric-well-care-during-covid-19/>

² See the AAP Guidance on the Necessary Use of Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic, available at the following link: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/guidance-on-the-necessary-use-of-telehealth-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Safe and effective provision of primary care services is a contractual requirement that is monitored by Anthem Blue Cross. Providers are periodically reviewed for compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.³ Reviews of well-child visits follow The Bright Futures/American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines and look for completion of screenings and assessments according to the periodicity schedule. Please find more information at this link:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/Pages/Well-Child-Care-A-Check-Up-for-Success.aspx>

³ Site Reviews: Facility Site Review and Medical Record Review:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2020/APL20-006.pdf>