



WHAT IS EPSDT?

EPSDT stands for Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment. EPSDT is a program that ensures **children under 21 enrolled in TennCare (Medicaid)** receive the health care they need.

EPSDT COVERAGE EXPLAINED

EARLY: EPSDT services help identify and treat health issues **early**. This means services are covered right at birth and during early childhood when preventative healthcare matters most. Preventative health care helps promote healthy growth and development starting at birth.

PERIODIC: Every state, including Tennessee, has a recommended schedule for **periodic** check-ups at each age in accordance with current pediatric standards. Children can still receive covered additional check-ups outside the recommended schedule if the screening is “medically necessary.” These are called “interperiodic” screenings.

SCREENING: Screenings will happen during check-ups with medical providers. In Tennessee, a screening can include any of the following (and more!);

- Health History
- Complete Physical Exam
- Lab Tests (as needed)
- Immunizations
- Vision and Hearing Screening
- Development/Behavioral Screening (as needed)
- Advice on how to keep your child healthy
- Dental exam

DIAGNOSTIC: If a screening shows there might be a health problem, **diagnostic** testing or referrals to other providers are covered by TennCare. These tests must be provided as soon as possible and can include exams for mental health, substance use, vision, hearing, or dental problems.

TREATMENT: If a screening or diagnostic procedure identifies a health problem, EPSDT covers any **treatment** that is considered “medically necessary” to correct, improve, or manage the condition. Covered treatment includes things like eyeglasses, hearing aids, preventative dental care, some orthodontia, and nursing services.

YOUR CHILD MUST BE

- Under 21 years old
- Enrolled in TennCare

WHO PROVIDES A DIAGNOSIS?

A diagnosis must come from a practitioner qualified to evaluate and diagnose health problems (physician, dentist, or provider at a community health or rehabilitation center).

WHO DECIDES WHAT IS “MEDICALLY NECESSARY”?

EPSDT covers medically necessary screenings and treatments ordered by a provider to improve a child’s health.

- Medical necessity is determined on a **case-by-case basis**, considering the child's needs.
- A physician, dentist, or child health, educational, or development professional can decide a **screening** is medically necessary.
- A child’s provider can decide a **treatment** is medically necessary.

DECISIONS & APPEALS

If TennCare and a child’s provider disagree about whether a service is medically necessary, **the state will make a final decision.**

- TennCare decides based on the evidence and according to the needs of the individual child.
- The child with their guardian can also exercise their legal rights and appeal any adverse decisions.

HELPFUL TIPS



- EPSDT applies as soon as the child enrolls in TennCare.
- TennCare is required to inform eligible children and their caregivers of EPSDT and ensure access to these services.
- TennCare is required to maintain a list of providers that are qualified to provide EPSDT services to children.
- TennCare will only cover services from in-network Medicaid providers with some exceptions.
- A formal request, or prior authorization, is **NOT REQUIRED** for screenings.
- There is no limit to the number of “medically necessary” screenings a child receives.
- There is no limit to the number of “medically necessary” treatments a child can receive under EPSDT even if TennCare's general policy has a limit on that service.
- EPSDT does not cover experimental treatments, services, or items.
- TennCare can choose to cover the less expensive option between treatment plans as long as the less expensive option is equally effective and actually available.

REMEMBER: Each State Medicaid program is required to cover EPSDT services under the Social Security Act and federal regulations.