

Mental Health Screening (6-20 Years)

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Mental health screening is required for ages 12-20 and recommended for ages 6-11. Referrals and follow up are critical for any identified concerns.

C&TC standards

General

Mental health surveillance is required at all C&TC visits for all ages. This includes obtaining the child and family's mental health history and the child's history of exposure to trauma.

Mental health screening using an approved, standardized instrument is recommended for all C&TC visits from ages 6 through 11 and is required for ages 12 through 20.

In addition to the required mental health screening, providers may choose to do a suicide risk screening. Refer to the [C&TC Suicide Risk Screening](#) fact sheet.

Personnel

Screening personnel qualifications are instrument-specific; refer to each instrument's instruction manual for more information.

A licensed health care provider must complete mental health surveillance: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

Documentation

Document surveillance in the C&TC visit record. Document screening with the name of the instrument, score, and anticipatory guidance given to the parent/caregiver or youth based on screening results. For positive results, document the referral and follow-up plan.

Refer to the documentation forms on the [C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources](#) webpage for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

Procedure

Refer to the [detailed comparison table of approved mental health screening instruments](#) for mental health and depression screening tools.

The PHQ-2 may also be used. If the PHQ-2 is positive, it must be followed by a PHQ-9 or another robust validated screener.

Referral

Children and youth with identified concerns should receive or be referred for further evaluation and treatment (Weitzman et al., 2025). Some options are to call the [Psychiatric Assistance Line](#), 855-431-6468 for psychiatric consultation with a Board-Certified Psychiatrist, refer to the map of

[school-linked behavioral health services](#) in Minnesota, or search [Fast Tracker](#). In addition to referring to clinical providers, consider sharing peer support resources:

- [Parent Warmline](#)
- [Youth & Family](#)
- [Parent Education and Support](#)

Importance of supporting mental wellbeing

Primary care providers see children and youth with a range of mental health concerns. Some children have concerns that do not meet criteria for a mental health disorder. In these cases, providers can play an important role by connecting families with community resources that promote overall mental wellbeing. Encourage families to seek developmentally appropriate opportunities that build:

- Connection to nature
- Positive social relationships
- Life skills
- A sense of purpose

Helpful resources may include schools, spiritual communities, cultural organizations, community centers, parks, and other local community-based programs.

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Standardized depression and suicide risk screening is recommended at all well-child checks beginning at 12 years (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2025).

United States Preventive Services Task Force

Screening for major depressive disorder is recommended at 12-18 years and for anxiety at 8-18 years (US Preventive Services Task Force [USPSTF], 2022a; USPSTF, 2022b). Screening for depression and anxiety is recommended in adults (USPSTF, 2023a; USPSTF, 2023b).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)
- [Children's mental health programs and services](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Community Tools](#)
- [Mental Health Promotion](#)

For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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Resource links

- [Suicide Risk Screening C&TC Fact Sheet \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/ctc/suiscreen.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/ctc/suiscreen.pdf)
- [C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources \(https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/)
- [Detailed comparison table of approved mental health screening instruments \(https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/comparison-table-mh-screening-instruments_tcm1053-322730.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/comparison-table-mh-screening-instruments_tcm1053-322730.pdf)
- [Psychiatric Assistance Line \(https://www.mnpsychconsult.com/\)](https://www.mnpsychconsult.com/)
- [Map of school-linked behavioral health services across Minnesota \(https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/childrens-mental-health/school-linked-bh-services/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/childrens-mental-health/school-linked-bh-services/)
- [Fast Tracker \(https://fasttrackermn.org/\)](https://fasttrackermn.org/)
- [Parent Warmline \(https://namimn.org/support/information-and-resources/helpline-parent-warmline/\)](https://namimn.org/support/information-and-resources/helpline-parent-warmline/)
- [Youth & Family \(https://macmh.org/youth-and-family/\)](https://macmh.org/youth-and-family/)
- [Parent Education and Support \(https://familywiseservices.org/find-parenting-support/parent-support-services/\)](https://familywiseservices.org/find-parenting-support/parent-support-services/)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG\)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?ldcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&revisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=dhs16_150092\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?ldcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&revisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=dhs16_150092)

- [Children's mental health programs and services \(https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/health-care/mental-health/programs-services/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/health-care/mental-health/programs-services/)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/ctc/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/ctc/index.html)
- [Community Tools \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/tools.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/tools.html)
- [Mental Health Promotion \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth)

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2025, February). *Recommendations for preventive pediatric health care*. Retrieved from https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf
- US Preventive Services Task Force (2022a). Screening for anxiety in children and adolescents: US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. *JAMA*, 328(14), 1438-1444. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2022.16936>
- US Preventive Services Task Force (2022b). Screening for depression and suicide risk in children and adolescents: US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. *JAMA*, 328(15), 1534-1542. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2022.16946>
- US Preventive Services Task Force (2023a). Screening for anxiety disorders in adults: US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. *JAMA*, 329(24), 2163-2170. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.9301>
- US Preventive Services Task Force (2023b). Screening for depression and suicide risk in adults: US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. *JAMA*, 329(23), 2057-2067. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.9297>
- Weitzman, C., Guevara, J., Curtin, M., Macias, M., AAP Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, AAP Council on Early Childhood, AAP Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, & Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (2025). Promoting optimal development: Screening for mental health, emotional, and behavioral problems: Clinical report. *Pediatrics*, 156(3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2025-073172>