



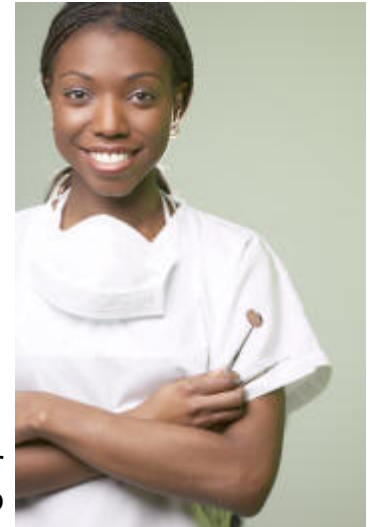
Dental Hygienist Overview

**Overview - Preparation - Day in the Life - Earnings -
Employment - Career Path Forecast - Professional Organizations**

Overview

Dental hygienists remove soft and hard deposits from teeth, teach patients how to practice good oral hygiene, and provide other preventive dental care. They examine patients' teeth and gums, recording the presence of diseases or abnormalities.

Dental hygienists use an assortment of different tools to complete their tasks. Hand and rotary instruments and ultrasonic devices are used to clean and polish teeth, including removing calculus, stains, and plaque. Hygienists use digital and traditional x-ray machines to take and develop dental pictures. They may use models of teeth to explain oral hygiene, perform root planning as a periodontal therapy, or apply cavity-preventative agents such as fluorides and pit and fissure sealants. In some states, hygienists are licensed to administer local anesthetics using syringes. Some states also allow hygienists to place and carve filling materials, temporary fillings, and periodontal dressings; remove sutures; and smooth and polish metal restorations.



Dental hygienists also help patients develop and maintain good oral health. For example, they may explain the relationship between diet and oral health or inform patients how to select toothbrushes and show them how to brush and floss their teeth.

Hygienists sometimes make a diagnosis and other times may prepare clinical and laboratory diagnostic tests for the dentist to interpret. Hygienists sometimes work chair side with the dentist during treatment.

Preparation

Prospective dental hygienists must become licensed in the state in which they wish to practice. A degree from an accredited dental hygiene school is usually required along with licensure examinations. A high school diploma and college entrance test scores are usually required for admission to a dental hygiene program. High school students interested in becoming a dental hygienist should take courses in biology, chemistry, and mathematics. Also, some dental hygiene programs require applicants to have completed at least 1 year of college. Specific entrance requirements vary from one school to another.

► **Licensure**

Dental hygienists must be licensed by the state in which they practice. Nearly all States require candidates to graduate from an accredited dental hygiene school and pass both a written and clinical examination. The American Dental Association's Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations administers the written examination, which is accepted by all states and the District of Columbia. State or regional testing agencies administer the clinical examination. In addition, most States require an examination on the legal aspects of dental hygiene practice. Alabama is the only state that allows candidates to take its examinations if they have been trained through a State-regulated on-the-job program in a dentist's office.



► **Accredited Programs**

The American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation is the nationally recognized accrediting authority for dental education accreditation. There are about 286 dental hygiene programs currently accredited. Most dental hygiene programs grant an associate degree, although some also offer a certificate, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree. A minimum of an associate degree or certificate in dental hygiene is generally required for practice in a private dental office, so working toward an associate degree is recommended over a certificate program. A bachelor's or master's degree usually is required for research, teaching, or clinical practice in public or school health programs. Schools offer laboratory, clinical, and classroom instruction in subjects such as anatomy, physiology, chemistry, microbiology, pharmacology, nutrition, radiography, histology (the study of tissue structure), periodontology (the study of gum diseases), pathology, dental materials, clinical dental hygiene, and social and behavioral sciences.



Below is a listing of accredited dental hygiene programs in the United States.

Master's Degrees and/or Doctoral Programs	
<p>Connecticut</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bridgeport (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Idaho</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idaho State University (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Maryland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Maryland Dental School (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Michigan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Michigan (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Minnesota</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Minnesota (Graduate: MS) <p>Missouri</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Missouri-Kansas (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>North Carolina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of North Carolina (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Nebraska</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Nebraska Medical (Graduate: MS) 	<p>New Jersey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey (Graduate: MA-HPE/MSHS/MHS; Doctoral: PhD) <p>New Mexico</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of New Mexico (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Tennessee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Tennessee State University (Graduate: MS) • University of Tennessee Health Science Center (Graduate: MDH) <p>Texas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (Graduate: MS-DH) • Baylor College of Dentistry (Graduate: MS-DH) <p>Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Dominion University (Graduate: MS-DH; Doctoral: PhD) <p>Washington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington (Graduate: MS; Doctoral: PhD) <p>West Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia University (Graduate: MS-DH)

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Undergraduate Degree Programs
Associate's or Bachelor's Recommended

Alabama

- Wallace State Community College

Alaska

- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- University of Alaska, Anchorage - Community and Technical College

Arizona

- Mesa Community College
- Mohave Community College
- Northern Arizona University, School of Health Professions
- Phoenix College
- Pima County Community College
- Rio Salado College

Arkansas

- Univ. of Arkansas -Fort Smith, Health Sciences
- Univ. of Arkansas, College of Health Related Professions

California

- Cabrillo College
- Cerritos College
- Chabot College
- Cypress College
- Diablo Valley College
- Foothill College
- Fresno City College
- Loma Linda University School of Dentistry
- Oxnard College
- Pasadena City College
- Riverside Community College
- Sacramento City College
- San Joaquin Valley College, Inc
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Shasta College
- Southwestern College
- Taft College
- University of Southern California School of Dentistry
- University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry
- West Los Angeles College
- Western Career College
- Western Career College at San Jose

Colorado

- Colorado Northwestern Community College
- Community College of Denver
- Pueblo Community College
- University of Colorado Denver

Connecticut

- Briarwood College
- Tunxis Community College - Allied Health
- University of Bridgeport/Fones School of Dental Hygiene
- University of New Haven

Delaware

- Delaware Technical & Community College

Missouri

- Missouri Southern State University
- Ozarks Technical Community College
- St. Louis Community College, Forest Park
- State Fair Community College
- University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry

Montana

- Montana State University, Great Falls

Nebraska

- Central Community College
- University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry

Nevada

- Community College of Southern Nevada
- Truckee Meadows Community College

New Hampshire

- New Hampshire Technical Institute

New Jersey

- Bergen Community College
- Burlington County College
- Camden County College
- Middlesex County College
- University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey School of Health-Related Professions

New Mexico

- Dona Ana Branch Community College
- San Juan College
- University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center

New York

- Broome Community College
- Erie Community College, North Campus
- Eugenio Maria De Hostos Community College
- Farmingdale State University of New York
- Hudson Valley Community College
- Monroe Community College
- New York City College of Technology
- New York University College of Dentistry
- Orange County Community College
- SUNY at Canton School of Sciences, Health and Professional Studies

North Carolina

- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Cape Fear Community College
- Catawba Valley Community College
- Central Carolina Community College
- Central Piedmont Community College
- Coastal Carolina Community College
- Fayetteville Technical Community College
- Forsyth Technical Community College
- Guilford Technical Community College
- Halifax Community College
- University of North Carolina School of Dentistry
- Wake Technical Community College
- Wayne Community College

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District of Columbia

- Howard University College of Dentistry

Florida

- Brevard Community College
- Broward Community College
- Daytona Beach Community College
- Edison College
- Florida Community College, Jacksonville
- Gulf Coast Community College
- Hillsborough Community College
- Indian River Community College
- Manatee Community College
- Miami-Dade Community College
- Palm Beach Community College
- Pasco-Hernando Community College
- Pensacola Junior College
- Santa Fe Community College-Florida
- South Florida Community College
- St. Petersburg College
- Tallahassee Community College
- Valencia Community College

Georgia

- Armstrong Atlantic State University
- Athens Technical College-Allied Health and Nursing
- Central Georgia Technical College
- Clayton State University
- Columbus Technical College
- Darton College
- Georgia Highlands College
- Georgia Perimeter College
- Lanier Technical College
- Medical College of Georgia School of Allied Health Sciences
- Middle Georgia Technical College
- Southeastern Technical College
- Valdosta State Univ/Valdosta Technical College
- West Central Technical College

Hawaii

- University of Hawaii

Idaho

- Apollo College of Boise
- Idaho State University College of Health Professions

Illinois

- Carl Sandburg College
- College of DuPage
- College of Lake County
- Illinois Central College
- John A. Logan College
- Kennedy-King College
- Lake Land College
- Lewis & Clark Community College
- Parkland College
- Prairie State College
- Rock Valley College
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- William Rainey Harper College

North Dakota

- North Dakota State College of Science

Ohio

- Columbus State Community College
- Cuyahoga Community College
- James A. Rhodes State College
- Lakeland Community College
- Lorain County Community College
- Ohio State University College of Dentistry
- Owens Community College
- Shawnee State University
- Sinclair Community College
- Stark State College of Technology
- University of Cincinnati/Raymond Walters College
- Youngstown State University

Oklahoma

- Rose State College
- Tulsa Community College
- University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry

Oregon

- Lane Community College
- Mt Hood Community College
- Oregon Institute of Technology
- Pacific University
- Portland Community College

Pennsylvania

- Community College of Philadelphia
- Harcum College
- Harrisburg Area Community College
- Luzerne County Community College
- Manor College
- Montgomery County Community College
- Northampton Community College
- Pennsylvania College of Technology
- Tri-State Business Institute
- University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine
- Westmoreland County Community College

Rhode Island

- Community College of Rhode Island

South Carolina

- Florence-Darlington Technical College
- Greenville Technical College
- Horry-Georgetown Technical College
- Midlands Technical College
- Trident Technical College
- York Technical College

South Dakota

- University of South Dakota

Tennessee

- Chattanooga State Technical Community College
- East Tennessee State University
- Roane State Community College
- Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee College of Allied Health

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<p>Indiana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indiana University Northwest ● Indiana University Purdue University ● Indiana University School of Dentistry ● Indiana University South Bend ● University of Southern Indiana <p>Iowa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Des Moines Area Community College ● Hawkeye Community College ● Iowa Central Community College ● Iowa Western Community College ● Kirkwood Community College <p>Kansas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Johnson County Community College ● Wichita State University <p>Kentucky</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Big Sandy Community and Tech College ● Bluegrass Community and Technical College - Cooper Campus ● Henderson Community College ● University of Louisville School of Dentistry ● Western Kentucky University <p>Louisiana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Louisiana State University School of Dentistry ● Southern University ● University of Louisiana at Monroe <p>Maine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● University College of Bangor ● University of New England <p>Maryland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allegany College of Maryland ● Baltimore City Community College ● University of Maryland Baltimore College of Dental Surgery <p>Massachusetts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bristol Community College ● Cape Cod Community College ● Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences ● Middlesex Community College ● Mount Ida College ● Mount Wachusett Community College ● Quinsigamond Community College ● Springfield Technical Community College <p>Michigan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baker College of Auburn Hills ● Baker College of Port Huron ● Delta College ● Ferris State University ● Grand Rapids Community College ● Kalamazoo Valley Community College ● Kellogg Community College ● Lansing Community College ● Mott Community College ● Oakland Community College ● University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry ● University of Michigan School of Dentistry ● Wayne County Community College District 	<p>Texas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amarillo College ● Austin Community College ● Baylor College of Dentistry Component of Texas A & M Health Sci Ctr ● Blinn College-Dental Hygiene ● Coastal Bend College ● Collin County Community College ● Del Mar College ● El Paso Community College ● Howard College ● Kingwood College ● Lamar Institute of Technology ● Midwestern State University ● Northeast Texas Community College ● Tarrant County College ● Temple College ● Texas State Technical College at Harlingen ● Texas Woman's University ● Tyler Junior College ● Univ. of Texas Health Science Cnt-Houston Branch ● University of Texas Health Science Cnt-San Antonio School of Allied Health Sciences ● Wharton County Junior College <p>Utah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dixie State College of Utah ● Salt Lake Community College ● The Utah College of Dental Hygiene ● Utah Valley State College ● Weber State University <p>Vermont</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vermont Technical Allied Health Department <p>Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Northern Virginia Community College ● Old Dominion University ● Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry ● Virginia Western Community College ● Wytheville Community College <p>Washington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clark College ● Columbia Basin College ● Eastern Washington University ● Lake Washington Technical College ● Pierce College ● Seattle Central Community College ● Shoreline Community College ● Yakima Valley Community College <p>West Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College ● The Community and Technical College at West Virginia University Institute of Technology ● West Liberty State College ● West Virginia University School of Dentistry
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<p>Minnesota</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argosy University • Century College • Herzing College, Lakeland Academy Division • Lake Superior College • Minnesota State Comm and Tech • College, Moorhead • Minnesota State University, Mankato • Normandale Community College • Rochester Community & Technical College • St. Cloud Technical College • University of Minnesota School of Dentistry <p>Mississippi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meridian Community College • Mississippi Delta Community College • Northeast Mississippi Community College • Pearl River Community College • University of Mississippi School of Health Related Professions 	<p>Wisconsin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chippewa Valley Technical College • Fox Valley Technical College • Madison Area Technical College • Milwaukee Area Technical College • Northcentral Technical College • Northeast Wisconsin Technical College • Waukesha County Technical College • Western Technical College <p>Wyoming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laramie County Community College • Sheridan College
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Day in the Life

Dental hygienists work in clean, well-lighted offices. Important health safeguards include strict adherence to proper radiological procedures and the use of appropriate protective devices when administering anesthetic gas. Dental hygienists also wear safety glasses, surgical masks, and gloves to protect themselves and patients from infectious diseases.

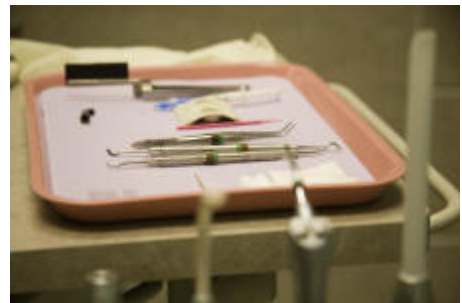


Flexible scheduling is a distinctive feature of this job. Full-time, part-time, evening, and weekend schedules are widely available. Dentists frequently hire hygienists to work only 2 or 3 days a week, so hygienists may hold jobs in more than one dental office. More than half of all dental hygienists worked part time, or less than 35 hours a week.

Dental hygienists should work well with others because they work closely with dentists and dental assistants as well as dealing directly with patients. Hygienists also need good manual dexterity, because they use dental instruments within a patient's mouth, with little room for error.

Earnings

Median hourly earnings of dental hygienists were \$30.19 in May 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between \$24.63 and \$35.67 an hour. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$19.45, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$41.60 an hour. Earnings vary by geographic location, employment setting, and years of experience. Dental hygienists may be paid on an hourly, daily, salary, or commission basis. Benefits vary substantially by practice setting and may be contingent upon full-time employment. According to the American Dental Association, 86 percent of hygienists receive hospital and medical benefits.



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Employment

Dental hygienists hold about 167,000 jobs in the United States. Because multiple job holding is common in this field, the number of jobs exceeds the number of hygienists. Almost all jobs for dental hygienists were in offices of dentists. A very small number worked for employment services, offices of physicians, or other industries.

Career Path Forecast

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, dental hygienists rank among the fastest growing occupations, and job prospects are expected to remain excellent.

Employment of dental hygienists is expected to grow 30 percent through 2016, much faster than the average for all occupations. This projected growth ranks dental hygienists among the fastest growing occupations, in response to increasing demand for dental care and the greater use of hygienists.



The demand for dental services will grow because of population growth, older people increasingly retaining more teeth, and a growing focus on preventative dental care. To meet this demand, facilities that provide dental care, particularly dentists' offices, will increasingly employ dental hygienists, and more hygienists per office, to perform services that have been performed by dentists in the past.

Job prospects are expected to remain excellent. Older dentists, who have been less likely to employ dental hygienists, are leaving the occupation and will be replaced by recent graduates, who are more likely to employ one or more hygienists. In addition, as dentists' workloads increase, they are expected to hire more hygienists to perform preventive dental care, such as cleaning, so that they may devote their own time to restorative procedures.



Professional Organizations

Professional organizations and associations provide a wide range of resources for planning and navigating a career in dentistry. These groups can play a key role in your development and keep you abreast of what is happening in your industry. Associations promote the interests of their members and provide a network of contacts that can help you find jobs and move your career forward. They can offer a variety of services including job referral services, continuing education courses, insurance, travel benefits, periodicals, and meeting and conference opportunities.



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The following is a list of associations focusing on the needs of dentists and dental hygienists. A broader list of professional associations is also available at www.careercornerstone.org.

▶ **American Dental Association (www.ada.org)**

The American Dental Association began in 1859, and with over 153,000 members is the largest and oldest national dental association.

▶ **American Dental Hygienists Association (www.adha.org)**

The American Dental Hygienists Association is the largest professional organization representing the interests of dental hygienists. Its members enjoy professional support and educational programs. The association's mission is to advance the art and science of dental hygiene, and to promote the highest standards of education and practice in the profession.

▶ **Student American Dental Hygienists' Association (www.adha.org/students/sadha.htm)**

Student Member of the American Dental Hygienists' Association, or SADHA, is a category of membership within the American Dental Hygienists' Association.