

## DENTAL ASSISTANT

### Job Description

Dental assistants work along side the dentist and assist with a variety of dental services. With the greater retention of natural teeth, the demand for dental services is increasing, thereby creating more opportunities for dental assistants. Dentists are expected to hire more assistants to meet the needs of California's growing population.

Dental assistants can begin their careers without a college degree through on-the-job training or a formal education program. Since dental assistants are in demand, career options include both full-time and part-time positions.

Specific tasks dental assistants are trained to perform may include:

- Taking and processing X-rays
- Assisting the dentist at chairside with the delivery of instruments and preparation of dental materials
- Counseling patients about preventive dental care and nutrition
- Operatory and instrument infection control
- Performing a variety of office management tasks

### Professional Outlook

A dental assistant usually works in the offices of general dentists or speciality dentists. Other areas include dental schools, health clinics and public health departments. Salaries typically are based upon the responsibilities associated with the specific position and the geographical location of employment.

### Educational Requirements

- Community/Junior colleges
- Vocational/Technical schools
- Regional Occupational programs
- On-the job training

### Contact Information

California Dental Association

<http://www.cda.org>

American Dental Assistants Association

<http://www.dentalassistant.org>

American Dental Association

<http://www.ada.org>

Committee on Dental Auxiliaries

<http://www.comda.ca.gov>

Dental Assisting National Board

<http://www.danb.org>

California Dental Assistants Association

<http://www.cdaaweb.org>