



DENTAL HYGIENIST

Job Description

Dental hygienists work with the dentist to provide comprehensive dental care to patients. A career in dental hygiene offers variety and personal satisfaction.

Dental hygienists clean teeth and provide preventive dental care, as well as teach patients how to practice good oral hygiene. They examine patients' teeth and gums, recording the presence of diseases or abnormalities. They may explain the relationship between diet and oral health and educate patients on how to properly brush and floss teeth. Hygienists use rotary, hand instruments, take X-rays, and may administer local anesthetics in some states.

Professional Outlook

Dental hygiene is projected to be one of the 30 fastest growing professions. Employment of dental hygienists is expected to continue to grow through 2008. This is due to a combination of factors such as; people are retaining their natural teeth longer and are aware of the importance of regular dental care. As the dentists' workload increases, they are expected to hire more hygienists to perform preventive dental care. Additionally, employment opportunities may include research, teaching or marketing.

Education

A career in dental hygiene requires a minimum of two years of college education. Some dental hygiene programs are longer than two years and may culminate in a baccalaureate degree. Because the dental hygiene education program includes dental and basic science courses, high school preparation should include biology and chemistry.

Contact Information

California Dental Association
<http://www.cda.org>
American Dental Association
<http://www.ada.org>
American Dental Hygienists' Association
<http://www.adha.org>
California Dental Hygienists Association
<http://www.cdha.org>
Committee on Dental Auxiliaries
<http://www.comda.ca.gov>