



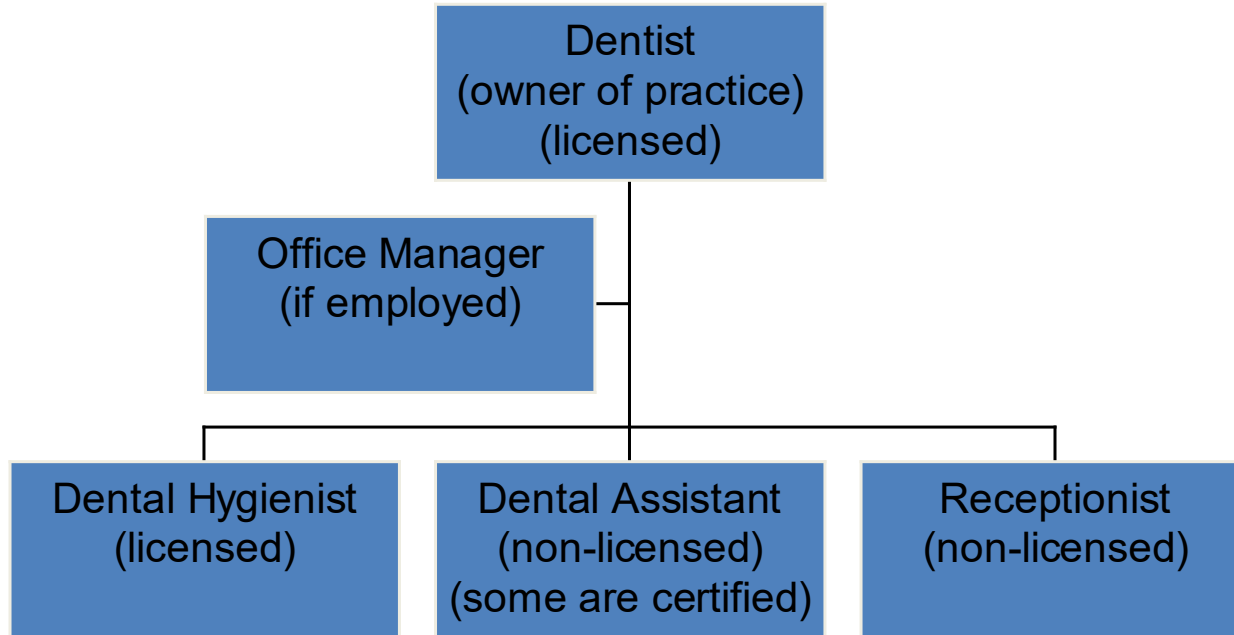
WAKE || TECH[®]

DENTAL HYGIENE

Welcome to the Dental Hygiene Profession



Dental Office Roles



Dental Hygiene Profession

- First Dental Hygiene Program established in 1913 by Dr. Alfred Fones in Bridgeport, Connecticut
- First graduates in 1914 worked in public schools
- Professional organization is the American Dental Hygienists' Association
- www.adha.org



Definition of a Dental Hygienist

Dental hygienists are licensed oral health professionals who focus on preventing and treating oral diseases-both to protect teeth and gums, and also to protect patients' total health. They are graduates of accredited dental hygiene education programs in colleges and universities and must take a written national board examination and a clinical examination before they are licensed to practice. In addition to treating patients directly, dental hygienists may also work as educators, researchers, and administrators.

www.adha.org

Education



General

- Must graduate from an accredited dental hygiene program to be eligible to take the National Dental Hygiene Board Examination (all states except Alabama)
- Accrediting Agency is the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA, CODA)
- Programs must also comply with guidelines developed by the Accrediting Body for the University – at Wake Tech it's the Southern Association of Colleges

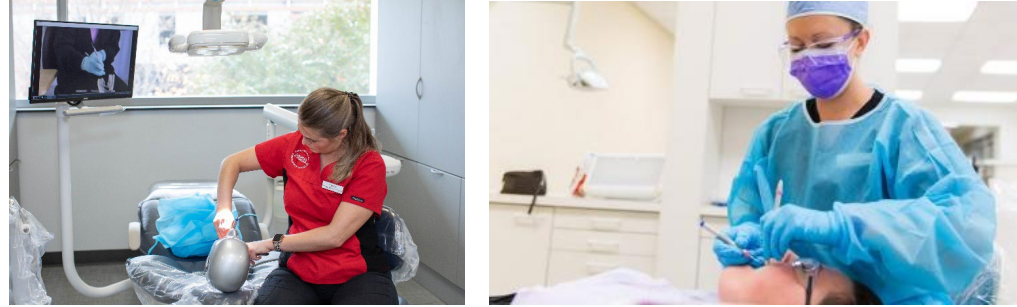
Dental Hygiene Programs

<http://www.adha.org/dental-hygiene-programs>

- Entry-Level (lowest level needed to be licensed)
 - Associate in Arts (AA)
 - Associate in Arts, Dental Hygiene (AA-DH)
 - Associate in Applied Science (AAS)
 - Associate in Science (AS)
 - Associate in Science, Dental Hygiene (AS-DH)
- Bachelor of Science (BS)
 - Bachelor of Science, Dental Hygiene (BS-DH)
- Bachelor of Science Degree Completion (BAS-DH, BS, BS-DH, BHSc, BS-AS, BS-HA, AD-MS)
- Master of Science in Dental Hygiene (MSDH, MS-DH, MDH, MS-EDHP, MS Health Studies)
- Master of Science in Related Discipline (MS: ADT)
- Doctoral (PhD)



AAS in Dental Hygiene



- 2-year curriculum (average time to complete)
- Entry level into the profession
- This degree is offered at Wake Technical Community College

What Does the "RDH" Designation Mean?

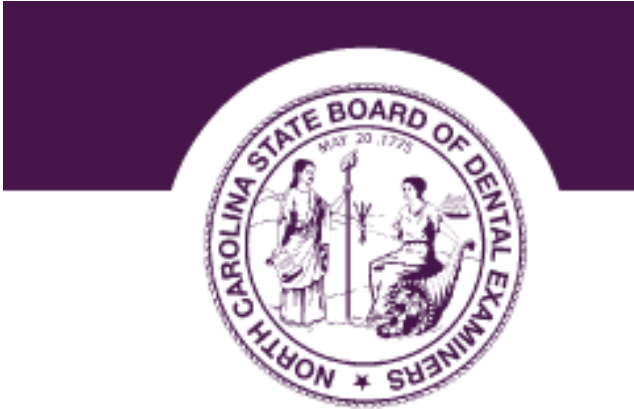
The "RDH" means Registered Dental Hygienist. The RDH credential identifies a dental hygienist as a licensed oral health professional. State licensure requirements typically indicate that a dental hygienist must graduate from an accredited dental hygiene education program, successfully pass a national written examination, and a state or regional clinical examination. (In Indiana, the designation LDH [Licensed Dental Hygienist] is used instead of RDH.)

www.adha.org

Boards for Licensure

- Boards are an independent process, separate from the school – fees subject to change at any time
- Currently:
 - American Dental Association (ADA) – National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE)
 - Computerized exam
 - <https://jcnde.ada.org/nbdhe>
 - American Board of Dental Examiners – ADEX Dental Hygiene Exam
 - Computerized portion and live clinical patient portion
 - <https://adextesting.org/adex-dental-hygiene/>

DH Licensure in NC



- Applicants for licensure in the State of North Carolina should note the Dental Laws of North Carolina and Board rules, specifically 90-229. In this section, it notes that the “North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners shall have the power and authority to refuse to issue a license to practice dental hygiene.” Examples of reasons for denial may include fraud, deceit, misrepresentation; conviction of or entering a guilty plea to any felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; chronic or persistent user of intoxicants, drugs, or narcotics that impair the ability to practice dental hygiene; and mentally, emotionally or physically unfit to practice dental hygiene. For more information, please review the entire regulation. **Applicants who may have a concern regarding their ability to be licensed should contact the State Board.**

License Reciprocity

- Each state has different laws for licensure
 - Need to review the State Board of Dental Examiners website for each state to see if licenses from one state transfer to another or if exams need to be taken or retaken
- All Accept the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination
- Clinical exams vary by state

What do dental hygienists do?

Each state has its own specific regulations and the range of services performed by dental hygienists varies from one state to another. As part of dental hygiene services, dental hygienists may:

- perform oral health care assessments that include the review of patients' health history, dental charting, oral cancer screening, and evaluation of gum disease / health;
- expose, process, and interpret dental radiographs (x-rays);
- remove plaque and calculus ("tartar") from above and below the gumline using dental instruments;
- apply cavity-preventive agents such as fluorides and sealants to the teeth;
- administer local anesthetic and / or nitrous oxide analgesia;
- educate patients on proper oral hygiene techniques to maintain healthy teeth and gums;
- counsel patients about plaque control and developing individualized at-home oral hygiene programs;
- administer smoking cessation programs; and
- counsel patients on the importance of good nutrition for maintaining optimal oral health.

Skills Needed

- Organized
- Detail oriented
- Time efficient
- Flexible
- Work well under pressure
- Fine psychomotor skills – work in small space with precise movements
- People skills – need to communicate well

Legally Allowable Functions for Dental Hygienists

- Varies by State
- Examples of Allowable Functions in North Carolina

Assessment

- Medical and Dental History with vital signs
- Head and Neck Exam
- Dental Charting
- Periodontal Charting/Assessment
- Radiographs – exposure; processing; interpretation
- O'Leary's Plaque Index
- Obtaining Impressions (alginate)
- Developing Study Models (pour and trim)



Legally Allowable Functions for Dental Hygienists (cont'd)

Planning

- Treatment Planning – clinical dental hygiene care and patient education to include prevention, nutritional counseling and tobacco cessation



Legally Allowable Functions for Dental Hygienists (cont'd)

Implementation

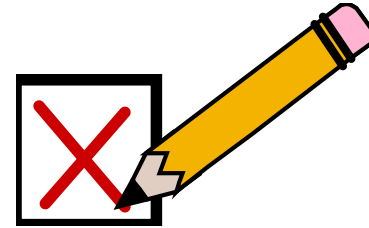
- Patient Education & Preventive Instructions including Nutritional Counseling and Tobacco Cessation
- Scaling and Root Planing – calculus, stain, plaque removal supragingivally and subgingivally
- Ultrasonic Scaling
- Oral Irrigation
- Selective Polishing, Air Abrasive Polishing
- Fluoride Application



Legally Allowable Functions for Dental Hygienists (cont'd)

Evaluation

- Continual re-evaluation of care plan
- 4-6 week check for periodontal patients
- 3, 4, 6 month to 1-year recare appointment planning



Career Paths of the Dental Hygienist

CLINICIAN – primary workplace

Private dental practices, Community clinics, Hospitals, University dental clinics, Prison facilities, Nursing homes, Schools

CORPORATE

Sales representatives, Product researchers, Corporate educators, Corporate administrators

PUBLIC HEALTH

Clinicians, Administrators, Researchers, State Public Health Officer, Community Clinic Administrator, Indian Health Service, Head Start programs, Local health departments, National Health Service Corps, School sealant programs, Rural or inner-city community clinics

RESEARCHER

Colleges and universities, Corporations, Governmental agencies, Nonprofit organizations

Career Paths of the Dental Hygienist

EDUCATOR

Clinical instructors, Classroom instructors, Program directors, Corporate educators

ADMINISTRATOR

Clinical Director, statewide school sealant program; Program Director, dental hygiene educational program; Dean of Health Sciences, educational institution; Executive Director, state association staff; Director, corporate sales

ENTREPRENEUR

Product Development and Sales, Practice Management Company, Employment Service, CE provider or Meeting Planner, Consulting Business, Founder of Nonprofit, Independent Clinical Practice, Professional Speaker / Writer

International Dental Hygiene

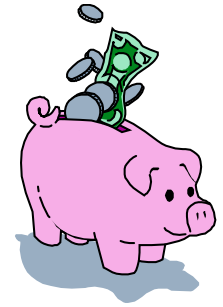
- There are opportunities to work overseas
- Rules vary by country
- <https://www.ifdh.org>



Types of practices

- Dental offices are small businesses
- Solo (one owner) vs. group (several dentists in practice) vs. corporate (run by a corporation)
- General (broad range of care) vs. specialty (ex. Periodontist, orthodontist, pedodontist, etc)

Salary Range



- **\$71,197** Median Annual Salary
- New workers start around \$54,843. Average pay is \$71,197 per year. Highly experienced workers can earn up to \$84,214.
- Higher degree doesn't often make a difference in a clinical setting

Methods of compensation



Hourly – get paid by the hour



Production/commission – paid based on what is brought in via treatment on the day

Need to “sell” dentistry to earn more



Combination – some offices pay a base salary then earn bonuses based on production

Benefits – Vary by employer

- Insurances - health, dental, vision, life
- Paid Time Off - Sick leave, vacation pay, bereavement leave, holiday pay
- Retirement plans
- Uniform allowance, Continuing Education courses paid, educational allowances

What is it like to work in private practice daily?

- 8-10 hour days normally
- Patients scheduled every 30 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes
- 8-12 patients treated in one day; one to two columns of appointments (sometimes double booked)
- Can run behind in schedule – may not finish on time; may not get lunch/breaks
- Deal with many different patient personalities



Working as a Clinical Hygienist

Rewards

- Flexibility – can select days you want to work – full-time vs. part-time
- Can work in single office or multiple
- Patient Rapport – meet a lot of people and get to know them
- Salary – make good wages

Challenges

- Hard work
- Hard on the body
- Lack of personal space – sit close to patient
- Can't normally select hours in the day worked – work when dentist works; off when dentist is on vacation
- Limited plans for growth in clinical practice

Flexibility in working

- Can select days per week, but often not hours in the day (tied to when the DDS works)
- Patient schedule on the day – if you don't arrive, patient gets canceled unless office finds a temp hygienist – need to be committed to the patient schedule
- No nights/weekends normally – nothing to take home at end of day

Patient Rapport



Get to know patients – spend a lot of time with them; look forward to them returning



Need to learn to talk to patients – can be difficult for introverts

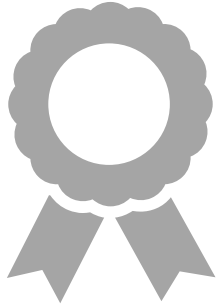
Challenges in the workplace

- Hard work
- Ergonomics – tough on the body – wrist/hands, neck, shoulders, back
- No personal space – will be in very close proximity to the patient
- Limited plans for growth in clinical practice – job doesn't allow for upward mobility in practice

Finding the right office

- It is important to find an office that suits you
- Feel like a member of a team
- Trust/respect – you trust the team and they trust you
- Morals and ethics of the office are similar to your own

Summary



Very Rewarding Career



Challenging Career