

Dental Hygienist Framework

What is a Dental Hygienist?

As a dental hygiene professional, you will use a variety of tools and devices to perform daily tasks. During your dental hygiene class, you'll learn how to use a range of instruments to remove plaque and stains from patients' teeth, including air-polishing tools and ultrasonic devices. As technology continues to advance, lasers are showing up next to the patient chair more frequently, and as a dental hygienist, you must be trained to use these tools properly. You must also be well-versed in radiography when using certain types of x-ray equipment. Finally, although state-by-state requirements vary, you may play a role in counseling patients on how different foods affect oral health and provide advice on proper techniques for care.

<https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/dental-hygienist/>

Below is a small chart that briefly outlines a broad introduction to the dental field. Dental Hygiene-specific information can be found later in the framework. The information is organized by grade level – which allows the educator to introduce the information to the student in *small, appropriate increments*.

<u>Programs and Professions</u>			
What professions and programs are there in dentistry?			
9th	10th	11th	12th
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce the levels within the dental profession<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Dental Assisting○ Dental Hygiene○ Dentist○ Dental Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the differences between each level of dentistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Types of schools & what programs they offer• Length of Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job Statistics<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Salary○ Job Growth

Ninth Grade

- **What are the levels within the dental profession?**
 - There are a few different professions within the dental field. It begins with a dental assistant, followed by a dental hygienist, a dentist, and finally, a dental specialist - if the dentist chooses to specialize. Dentists may specialize in any of the ten dental specialties currently adopted by the American Dental Association. Some of these specialties include orthodontics and oral surgery.
<https://www.ada.org/en/ncrdscb/dental-specialties/specialty-definitions>

Tenth Grade

- **What are the differences between each level in dentistry? What do these professionals do?**
 - *Dental Assistant:* A dental assistant provides hands-on help for the dentist. The dental assistant performs preparatory work such as sterilizing equipment, preparing and developing x-rays, and taking impressions/molds of patients' teeth. Additionally, they guide the patients through their procedures and instruct patients on oral care. <https://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/careers-in-dentistry/dental-team-careers/dental-assistant>
 - *Dental Hygienist:* A dental hygienists work duties include performing dental cleanings, examining patients for signs of oral diseases (cancer screenings and gingivitis), and providing preventative dental care under the supervision of a dentist. They also educate patients on ways to improve oral health. <https://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/careers-in-dentistry/dental-team-careers/dental-hygienist>
 - *Dentist:* Dentists provide a lot of services for the continued oral health of their patients, focusing on preventing and stopping diseases through regular examinations. General dentists diagnose and treat patients, potentially offering more advanced treatments, such as bridgework, fitting for dentures, cavity fillings, and root canals — or referring the patient to specialized dentists. <https://www.ada.org/en/about-the-ada/dentists-doctors-of-oral-health>
<https://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-student-resources/career-options-after-dental-school/understanding-advanced-dental-education/program-options-and-descriptions>
 - *Dental Specialists:* Dental specialists are dentists who receive additional training in a specific dental specialty, beyond their general dentistry degree. There are 10 official dental specialties recognized by the American Dental Association. The two most common are Oral Surgeons and Orthodontists. <https://www.ada.org/en/about-the-ada/dentists-doctors-of-oral-health>

Eleventh Grade

- **What are the types of schools the student can attend?**
 - Technical schools
 - Technical schools, also known as “vocational schools,” offer targeted, shorter instruction at a lower tuition, or cost, leading to a

certificate or an associate's degree. Many technical schools in Texas offer dual enrollment opportunities for high school students.
<https://scitexas.edu/technical-school/>

- Community College
 - A community college is an institution that offers short term certificates or two-year associate's degrees. Associate's degrees transfer and often lead to four-year degrees at partnering universities. Many community colleges in Texas offer dual enrollment opportunities for high school students. They typically offer less expensive education than four-year universities. Most community colleges have open enrollment, meaning there are very few requirements for admission.
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2012/03/what-is-community-college>
- College
 - A college is a four-year institution that offers degrees in specific areas of study (i.e. medicine or law). These degrees can lead to graduate or professional school. Colleges may have open enrollment or may have strict admission requirements.
<https://www.trade-schools.net/articles/college-vs-university.asp#university>
- University
 - A University is a four-year institution that offers many different degrees through multiple "colleges" located on the same campus. Typically, a university may have a "College of Education" or a "College of Health Sciences". Universities also usually offer graduate (Master's, Doctorates) and professional degrees. Typically, universities have strict admission requirements that include grades, placements tests, and admissions tests like the SAT/ACT.
<https://www.trade-schools.net/articles/college-vs-university.asp#university>
- **What types of school does a student need to attend for the dental hygiene program? How long is this program?**
 - *Dental Hygiene:*
 - Dental hygiene is typically offered as an associate's degree, but there are also bachelor's degrees available. It is primarily offered at community colleges, but some universities offer it as well.
 - This program takes two years on average, not including required prerequisites.
<https://www.valleymorningstar.com/2019/10/05/tstc-dental-hygiene-produce-smile->

[changers/#:~:text=The%20Dental%20Hygiene%20program%20is,work%20as%20a%20dental%20hygienist.](#)

Twelfth Grade

- **What is the salary and expected job growth for a dental hygienist?**
 - Dental Hygienist
 - The average hourly wage for a dental hygienist is \$35.97 per hour. The average annual wage is \$74,820. The projected job growth is 11% over a ten-year period.

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm>

<u>Academic Pathway</u>			
How can I prepare to become a dental hygienist?			
9th	10th	11th	12th
• GPA Awareness	• Dual Enrollment	• Relevant Coursework	• Know Your Learning Style

- **Ninth Grade**
 - **What is your GPA and does it matter?**
 - A GPA, or Grade Point Average, is typically a 4-point scale that will reflect a student’s academic performance.
 - It is extremely crucial that a student understands that the GPA that begins accumulating their freshman year of high school, will be with them for the rest of their lives. Keeping their GPA as high as possible is very important. Not only do colleges and universities look at a GPA when accepting or denying an applicant, hiring committees for job openings look at this too.
- <https://www.crimsoneducation.org/us/blog/average-gpa-ivy-league>
- **Tenth Grade**
 - **What courses should a student consider taking in order to become a dental hygienist?**
 - A student interested in the dental field can best prepare by participating in a dual enrollment program while in high school. Dual enrollment is when students enroll in college courses, while still in high school, to earn college credit prior to graduating from high school. These courses are applied toward both high school and college graduation and can usually be transferred to other colleges or universities. Dual enrollment procedures and transferring abilities can and will vary from state to state and college to college.

- The benefits of participating in a dual enrollment program in high school are numerous. Taking dual enrollment courses allow the student to transition from high school to post-secondary-level coursework more easily. The student can get a taste of what college is without being overwhelmed with a whole new environment. It provides high school students with a wider range of courses so that they have the opportunity to explore different fields before they declare a major or enter a program. Dual enrollment courses also offer an opportunity for students who are not able or do not qualify to take AP classes, to show a more rigorous course load on their transcripts. Finally, one of the biggest benefits that dual enrollment offers is the amount of money and time the student will be saving overall.
- Students who participate in dual enrollment courses in high school, can be farther ahead in their goals of moving up within the dental field than those who do not. If they choose to move up within the dental field by becoming a dental hygienist or dentist, they will already have core pre-requisites out of the way.
<https://collegegrad.com/careers/dental-assistants>

- **Eleventh Grade**

- **What dual enrollment courses can be relevant to dentistry?**

- CORE CURRICULUM COURSES

- Mathematics (College Algebra) 3-4 credit hours
 - Life and Physical Sciences (Biology) 8 credit hours
 - Creative Arts (Art/Music) 3 credit hours

- ACADEMIC TRANSFERABLE COURSES

- Biology for Science Majors I 4 credit hours
 - Biology for Science Majors II 4 credit hours
 - Anatomy and Physiology I 4 credit hours
 - Anatomy and Physiology II 4 credit hours
 - General Chemistry I 4 credit hours
 - General Chemistry II 4 credit hours
 - College Algebra 4 credit hours
 - Elementary Statistical Methods 4 credit hours
 - Pre-Calculus Math 4 credit hours
 - Calculus I 4 credit hours
 - Calculus II 4 credit hours
 - Calculus III 4 credit hours

<https://www.southtexascollege.edu/dual/dual-courses.html>

- **Twelfth Grade**

- **How else can a student prepare for a job as a dental hygienist?**

- Study. Study. Study. When a student goes through a dental hygiene program, they will have to pass a licensing exam to ensure

they are ready to practice in an office. It is crucial that a student knows what studying style is best for them in order to succeed.
<https://collegepuzzle.stanford.edu/knowning-your-learning-style-can-help-college-success/>

<u>Admissions</u>			
What do I need in order to apply for a dental hygiene program?			
9th	10th	11th	12th
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dental Hygiene Program Summary Programs in RGV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Length of program Program Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission Requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing Education (CE)

- Ninth Grade**

- What does a dental hygiene program entail?**

- In TSTC’s Dental Hygiene program, you will receive training on assessing the oral cavity and people’s teeth. Working directly with patients, dental hygienists show people how to take proper care of their oral health. They clean and polish teeth and take X-rays and molds. They also perform some administrative duties, such as recording patients’ dental histories and updating charts. You’ll also learn to take X-rays and perform basic oral health screenings. Students will provide patient education on oral hygiene, tobacco cessation, nutritional status, and overall oral and systemic health. Students will develop the skills needed to provide preventive dental care to the public and attend clinical rotations on campus and off-campus in their last semester. That’s sure to put a smile on your face. <https://www.tstc.edu/programs/dentalhygiene/>

- Where can a student apply and attend a dental hygiene program?**

- There is one dental hygiene program in the Rio Grande Valley, located at TSTC in Harlingen. Click the link below to access their website. <https://www.tstc.edu/programs/dentalhygiene/>

- Tenth Grade**

- What is the length of the dental hygiene program?**

- At TSTC, a student can complete the dental hygiene program in an estimated 2 years. <https://www.tstc.edu/programs/dentalhygiene/>
- **What is the cost of the dental hygiene program?**
 - At TSTC, the total estimated cost of the dental hygiene program is \$18.823. https://www.tstc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2022_-_Application-Packet.pdf
- **Eleventh Grade**
 - **What are the admission requirements for the dental hygiene program?**
 - At TSTC, the prerequisites for the dental hygiene program include, but are not limited to:
 - Be TSI Complete: Reading, Writing, and Math
 - Courses that MUST be completed prior to beginning the DHY program: BIOL 2301 & 2101 Anatomy and Physiology I CHEM 1305 & 1105 Intro to Chem ENGL 1301 Composition I SPCH Speech Elective (student can choose between 1311, 1315, or 1318)
 - Students must take the ATI-TEAS Exam, Test of Essential Academic Skills, to be considered eligible candidates for the Dental Hygiene Program. The ATI-TEAS Exam measures basic essential skills in the academic areas of reading, mathematics, science, and English and language usage. The test will be administered at the TSTC counseling center during the month of January, 2022 for a fee of \$65.00 (plus tax) which must be paid by credit card in the student's name at the time of the test, and a \$5.00 proctoric fee online, with a single debit or credit card on the day of the scheduled test.
https://www.tstc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2022_-_Application-Packet.pdf
- **Twelfth Grade**
 - **What is required of a dental hygienist?**
 - Dental hygienists are required to renew their license, typically every 1–3 years. You'll need to pay any necessary fees and provide proof that you've completed the required number of continuing education

hours as determined by your state. These are often somewhere between 10 and 20 hours for every 1-year cycle, 30–50 hours for 2-cycles, and around 60 for 3-year cycles.

<https://www.alliedhealthschools.com/specialties/how-to-become-a-dental-hygienist/>

In order to get RDH license:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Has graduated from an accredited high school or holds a certificate of high school equivalency, General equivalency Diploma (GED);
- Has graduated from a dental school accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association with a degree in dentistry or a degree or certificate in dental hygiene, or has graduated from a CODA-accredited school or college of dental hygiene with a degree in dental hygiene;
- Has taken and passed the examination for dental hygienists given by the American Dental Association Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations;
- Has taken and passed a clinical examination administered by a regional examining board designated by the Board within the last five (5) years.
- Beginning October 1, 2021, applicants applying for licensure or registration with the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) must complete a course in human trafficking prevention approved by the executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and submit proof of completion with their application. This will be in addition to all required documentation that needs to be submitted to the TSBDE. For information on where to find approved courses, please click here.

○ **How can a student become a better job applicant once they have become a dental hygienist?**

- After completion of a dental hygiene program, dental hygienists can choose to pursue additional training in such areas as education, business administration, marketing, and public health. Gaining this additional knowledge can help you find more specialized, high-level roles while increasing your earning potential.

<https://www.alliedhealthschools.com/specialties/how-to-become-a-dental-hygienist/>

