



Health Careers In Alaska

www.HealthCareersInAlaska.Info

Dental Hygienist

The dental hygienist is a practicing member of the dental healthcare team. A dental hygienist works under the supervision of a dentist and has the primary responsibility of teaching patients how to care for and maintain the cleanliness of their teeth and gums. In addition to providing the routine service of removing stains and deposits from patients' teeth, a dental hygienist also has the responsibility of taking x-rays, applying sealants to children's teeth and administering fluoride treatments to help prevent decay.

When it comes to good oral health and preventive care, the dental hygienist is the person responsible for making sure the patients stay on track with routine care.

Hygienists in Alaska are also now permitted some restorative functions, if certified. This includes placing and finishing amalgam (silver) and composite (white) restorations (fillings). The dentist prepares the tooth by removing the decay, then the hygienist can place the filling.

Dental Hygienist Facts:

Where do dental hygienists work in Alaska?

In rural Alaska, dental hygienists usually work with dentists in Indian Health Service or regional health corporation clinics. Others practice in private clinics. Dental hygienists also find positions in health education and community health programs.

Educational Requirements

Following a two or four-year college education, licensure is required to practice. All educational plans include:

- Graduation from high school with coursework in science, math, and English.
- Most dental hygienist programs require one of the standard college entrance examinations (ACT, SAT, etc.). Some schools require or recommend the Health Occupations Basic Entrance test (HOBET) as well.
- Community colleges offer two-year programs and award an Associate's degree or certificate. Many programs require a college background before admission.
- Four-year programs award Bachelor's degrees. Usually the first two years are spent taking prerequisite courses in science and other subjects. The final two years are spent in the study of dental hygiene.

Hourly Wage Range:

\$32.98 - \$56.61 (Mean \$43.62)
**based on Alaska DOL data*

Years in School:

2 - 4 years (after high school graduation).

Academic Programs in Alaska

Accredited Schools in Alaska:

University of Alaska Anchorage, Community Tech College

Dental Programs Department, AHS Building, Room 160

Phone: (907) 786-6929

Email: aydent@uaa.alaska.edu

Web site: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/alliedhealth/academics/dental/hygiene/index.cfm>

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Community Tech College

Dental Programs, Allied Health Department

Phone: (907) 455-2805

Email: slvargas@alaska.edu

Web site: <http://www.ctc.uaf.edu/programs/health/dh/>

State Contacts:

Alaska State Dental Hygienists' Association

Phone: (907) 349-1553

Website: <http://www.asdha.com/>

National Contacts:

American Dental Hygienists' Association

Phone: (312) 440-8900

Email: mail@adha.net

Website: <http://www.adha.org/>

