

# DENTIST

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat diseases of the teeth, gums, and mouth. They work directly with patients to restore or replace teeth damaged by decay or lost from trauma or disease; extract teeth when necessary; and correct crooked teeth to improve chewing, speech and appearance. In addition, dentists may perform corrective surgery on gums and supporting bones to treat diseases of the gums and other tissues of the mouth. Dentists provide instruction and advice on oral health care and preventive measures patients can take to keep their teeth and gums healthy. Dentists are also concerned with the general health of the patient and may detect signs and symptoms of illness that require care by another health professional.

There are nine dental specialty areas that require advanced training: endodontics (tooth roots), oral surgery (mouth surgery), orthodontics (braces, etc.), pedodontics (children), prosthodontics (artificial teeth), periodontics (gum disease), oral pathology (structural and functional effects of the oral cavity), public health dentistry (community dental health), and oral and maxillofacial radiology (complex x-rays).

## Where do dentists work in Alaska?



In rural Alaska, many dentists are employed in salaried positions with the Indian Health Service or regional health corporations. Others work in private practice or as partners of other dentists.



## Hourly Wage Range\*

The mean hourly wage for general (non-specialty)

Alaska dentists is **\$81.16**

\*based on Alaska DOL data

## Educational Requirements

There are two equal degrees for dentists: the DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) and the DMD (Dental Medicine Doctorate). Both require graduation from an accredited dental school.



**Years in School:  
8 years or more\***

\*after high school graduation



- Graduation from high school with a strong preparatory background in science, math, and English.
- Graduation from a four-year college with a strong science background. Pre-dental students often have bachelor's degrees in chemistry or biology. Any degree is probably acceptable as long as it includes science courses required by the dental school to which the student is applying.
- High grades are very important. A high score on the Dental Admissions Test.
- Completion of a dental program awarding the DDS or DMD degree.
- Specialty training of two to four years may follow dental school.

## Academic Programs in Alaska

There are no accredited schools in Alaska. To learn about dental schools in the US, contact the Alaska Dental Society office. In addition, a listing of all the accredited dental education programs in the United States can be found on the American Dental Association website at [http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/programs/search\\_ddsdmd\\_us.asp](http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/programs/search_ddsdmd_us.asp).

## State and National Contacts

### State Contact:

Alaska Dental Society

Phone: (907) 563-3003

Email: [info@akdental.org](mailto:info@akdental.org)

Web site: <http://www.akdental.org/>

### National Contact:

American Dental Association

211 East Chicago Ave.

Chicago, IL 60611-2678

Phone: (312) 440-2500 Web

site: <http://www.ada.org/>

Information from: [www.healthcareersinalaska.info](http://www.healthcareersinalaska.info) Updated: September 29, 2008



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