



Explore a Career as a DENTAL ASSISTANT OR DENTAL HYGIENIST

Target Occupation Profile

What do Dental Assistants and Hygienists do?

Dental assistants and hygienists work with dentists in the delivery of quality oral healthcare. Dental assistants perform many tasks, ranging from patient care and taking x-rays to recordkeeping and scheduling appointments. Dental hygienists clean teeth, examine patients for signs of oral diseases such as gingivitis, and provide other preventive dental care. Dental assistants and hygienists work under the supervision of dentists and work closely with each other in their day-to-day activities. They are responsible for direct patient care and work with their hands as well as their minds.

Training & Educational Opportunities

You will have many opportunities for employment as a dental assistant or hygienist, but first you will need to complete the proper training and credentialing. Dental hygienists require an associate degree from an accredited program. These programs include classroom and laboratory work in which students learn about teeth, gums, jaws, and other areas that may require dental work. Extensive supervised practical experience is also part of the program.

As a Dental Assistant or Hygienist you will:

- Assist dentists during procedures
- Instruct patients in proper dental hygiene
- Prepare the work area for patient treatment by setting out instruments and materials
- Process x-rays and complete lab tasks under the direction of a dentist
- Schedule patient appointments
- Sterilize dental instruments
- Record and review patient medical history

Dental Assistants and Hygienists are in demand in Cook County!

Cook County employment of dental assistants and hygienists is expected to increase through 2020. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recognizes the job outlook for these occupations as growing faster than average.

Dental Assistant or Hygienist

Training Providers

There are many training providers available in Cook County to supply you with the training you need for a career as a dental assistant or hygienist.

To access a list of training providers for these occupations and many more, please visit Illinoisworknet.com and select the 'Training and Credentials' menu option to view 'WIOA Approved Training Programs.'



Types of Employers

There are many types of employers looking to hire dental assistants in Cook County, including:

- Endodontic offices
- General dental practices
- Oral and maxillofacial surgeons
- Orthodontic offices
- Outpatient clinics
- Pediatric dentist offices
- Public health dentist offices

Wages & Openings

Job Title	Average Annual Job Openings Chicago Metro	Average Annual Job Openings Cook County	Average Starting Hourly Wage	Average Hourly Wage With Experience
Dental Hygienist	175	110	\$26.31	\$35.45
Dental Assistant	410	257	\$15.37	\$18.23

*Source: Emsi, 2017.2



Opportunities

After you receive your dental assistant certificate, you will have many opportunities for additional certification and advancement. Some opportunities include:

- Dental Health Instructor
- Dental Office Manager
- Oral Surgery Assistant
- Orthodontic Assistant



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