

Careers in dental hygiene



Working closely with other members of the dental team, dental hygienists focus on preventative dentistry where they try to prevent tooth decay and people from getting gum disease.

What do dental hygienists do?

Working from within their own surgery, dental hygienists work to help their daily list of patients to keep their teeth and gums clean and healthy. This can range from providing advice on the best way to care for teeth, to providing treatment to providing treatments.

A dental hygienist may carry out professional cleaning through scale and polish and to treat gum disease or may carry out treatments such as applying fissure sealants to teeth to seal them up to prevent sugar getting inside any 'nooks and crannies'.

Helping to improve oral hygiene, a career in dental hygiene is greatly rewarding.

Where do dental hygienists work?

Dental hygienists work across various settings:

- general dental practices
- community clinics
- hospitals
- prisons
- education – some dental hygienists may decide to go on to teach the next generation of hygienists.

What skills do I need to be a good dental hygienist?

- you will need to have good communication and people skills, be friendly and able explain things in a way that people can understand
- as a practical role you will need good manual dexterity to enable you to be able to use the required tools with precision
- you will need good eyesight and be able to concentrate for long periods of time
- responsible for carrying out duties such as professional cleaning, you will need to have a good attention to detail.

How do I become a dental hygienist?

To become a dental hygienist you need to complete a diploma in dental hygiene, which can take around two years to complete.

In Wales there are two full-time university courses available, one in Bangor University and the other in Cardiff University Dental School. Both courses take two years to complete and feature blended learning, giving students the opportunity to work in clinics.

Once qualified dental hygienists are required to register with the General Dental Council (GDC).

Want to find out more?

Careersville: <https://careersville.heiw.wales>

NHS Wales Careers: www.nhswalescareers.com