

This demand is largely due to the increasing number of services that a hygienist provides that were previously performed by dentists. There will also be numerous job openings caused by the need to replace hygienist that transfer to other occupations, retire, or leave the profession for other reasons. Population growth and greater retention of teeth will also increase the demand for qualified oral health professionals.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Dental Hygienist' Association
444 North Michigan Avenue,
Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60611-3902
Phone: (312) 440-8900
Phone: (800) 243-2342
Fax: (312) 440-8929
Web: www.adha.org

American Dental Education Association
1625 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 667-9433
Web: www.adea.org

American Dental Association
211 E. Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 440-2390
Web: www.ada.org/prof/ed/careers

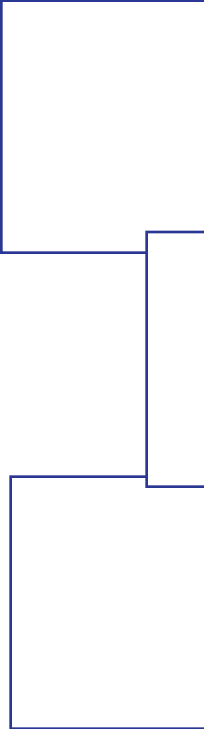


MHA HEALTH CAREERS CENTER

6425 LAKEOVER ROAD (39213)
P.O. Box 16444
JACKSON, MS 39236-6444
PHONE (601) 982-3251
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POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Dental hygienist are licensed oral health professionals who examine patients' teeth and gums in an effort to provide the best possible oral health care. Hygienist work closely with the dentist to provide educational, clinical, and therapeutic services in an effort to prevent oral disease such as dental caries (cavities) and periodontal disease (gum disease). They evaluate patients' needs by performing screening procedures, which include reviewing health and dental history and taking temperature, pulse, and blood pressure. Some of their other duties include examining teeth and other oral structures, taking and developing dental radiographs (X-rays), removing calculus and plaque from above and below the gum line, counseling patients on proper nutrition and appropriate oral hygiene techniques, and applying cavity-preventing agents (fluoride and sealant) to teeth. Some dental hygienist are responsible for designing and implementing dental health programs for communities and organizations. Their main objective is educating individuals, as well as the general public, on the best preventative oral health care and the importance of good oral hygiene habits. Anyone interested in this line of work should enjoy working with a variety of different people, be articulate and organized, and work well as part of a team.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The majority of dental hygienist work with dentists in private dental offices and clinics. Other employment opportunities exist in hospitals, nursing homes, research organizations, education, health departments, and public health clinics. They may also be employed with companies that market dental-related supplies and equipment.

HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION

Students interested in a future career in dental hygiene should take high school courses in biology, chemistry, algebra, English, health occupations/medical professions education, geometry, psychology, computer skills, physical education, and speech.

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

Students entering a dental hygienist program should have a high school diploma or equivalent. Individuals must complete a two-year associate program or a four-year baccalaureate program accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation. Upon completion of the educational requirements, students are eligible to take the Dental Hygiene National Board Examination (a comprehensive written exam) and the state board clinical examination. Once these requirements are met, an individual obtains a license and the title of Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH). Students interested in dental hygiene should contact schools for information on admission and course of study.

EDUCATION

Meridian Community College
910 Highway 15
Meridian, MS 39301
Phone: (601) 478-1234

Mississippi Delta Community College
PO Box 668
Moorhead, MS 39074
Phone: (662) 845-1234

Northeast Mississippi Community College
101 Cunningham
Booneville, MS 38829
Phone: (662) 326-1234

Pearl River Community College
5448 US Highway 90
Hattiesburg, MS 39324
Phone: (601) 833-1234

The University of Mississippi
2500 North State Street
Jackson, MS 39210
Phone: (601) 978-1234

Average Annual Salary Range

Employment Outlook
hygienist should be in demand. The Department of Health and Human Services for hygienist is projected to grow through the year 2018, much faster than other occupations.