

Dental hygienist

Dental hygienists are an important part of the dental team, preventing dental problems in adults and children.

Working life

You'll help children and adults look after their teeth and gums. Sometimes you might be working on a one-to-one basis while on occasion you'll work with groups of people.



You'll carry out procedures such as:

- scaling teeth (at times under local anaesthetic)
- polishing teeth
- applying topical fluoride and fissure sealants

You are likely to work in general dental practices but there are job opportunities in hospitals and community dental services .

Your work as a dental hygienist will save teeth by preventing and treating gum disease, helping people get rid of associated problems like bad breath. The dentist will usually advise you and help direct your work,

although it's now possible for hygienists and therapists who have extra training to set up their own practices or work independently in a dental practice so they can see patients without them seeing a dentist first.

In the community, you could work with people with a wide range of special or additional needs. If you are based in a hospital, you will help patients who may have had major surgery or complicated orthodontic treatment or have particular medical conditions. The hospital patients you see may be very ill, apprehensive or unsure after life-changing surgery.

Cheryl McBroom

Dental hygienist

As a hygienist you can work in a range of different places with different patients. When I was training I had placements in a community dental clinic, an acute mental health trust and a school for children with special needs.

Read Cheryl's story [1]

Entry requirements, skills and interests

You'll need five GCSE subjects graded 4-7 or A-C, plus two or three A levels (depending on the university) or a recognised dental nursing qualification to get on to a dental hygiene course. Good people and communication skills are very important and as you might work in different settings, you'll need to enjoy a job with plenty of variety.

Training

To practise as a dental hygienist, you need to take a course approved by the General Dental Council (GDC) [2] and then need to register with the GDC.

Subjects studied include:

- anatomy and physiology [3]
- preventive dentistry
- dental health education
- dental pathology
- the management and care of patients

Several dental schools offer courses combining dental hygiene and dental therapy.

If you are studying a dental hygiene course at level 5 or 6 then you may be eligible for at least £5,000 a year towards your studies while at university. Your personal circumstances may mean you could receive more. And the good news? You'll never have to pay it back. Find out more. [4]

Career development

With experience, you can progress to become a practice manager, train other dental hygienists or develop further skills such as sedation or tooth whitening. You could also work as an orthodontic therapist.

Pay and benefits

Dental hygienists may be self-employed or employed directly by a dental practice so your working hours and pay will vary but some evening or weekend work may be required.

If you work for the the NHS in a hospital or community clinic, your starting salary might be at bands 5 or 6 of the Agenda for Change [5] pay scale. You'll typically work 37.5 hours a week.

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course to
become a
dental hygienist**

Region

- Any -

Type of qualification

- Any -

Full or part time

- Any -

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Displaying 11 - 15 of 28 matches

Dental Hygiene

London South Bank University

View course [6] Opens in a new window

- Qualification

Bachelor of Science (with Honours) - BSc (Hons)

Study mode

Full-time

Duration of the course

3 Years

Leading to a career in

Dental hygiene or therapy

- Contact details

study@lsbu.ac.uk [7]

0207 815 7500

- Region

London

Admissions address

103 Borough Road
London
SE1 0AA
United Kingdom

Dental Hygiene

Teesside University, Middlesbrough

View course [8] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
 - Bachelor of Science (with Honours) - BSc (Hons)
- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3 Years
- Leading to a career in
 - Dental hygiene or therapy
- Contact details
 - shlsadmissions@tees.ac.uk [9]
- Region
 - North East
- Admissions address
 - Borough Road
 - Middlesbrough
 - TS1 3BX
 - United Kingdom

Oral Health Science

University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)

View course [10] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
 - Bachelor of Science - BSc
- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3 Years
- Leading to a career in
 - Dental hygiene or therapy
- Contact details
 - info@uhi.ac.uk [11]
 - 01463 279190
- Region
 - Scotland
- Admissions address
 - Castle Grounds
 - Stornoway
 - HS2 0XR
 - Scotland

Dental Therapy and Hygiene

University of Plymouth

[View course \[12\]](#) Opens in a new window

- Qualification
 - Bachelor of Science (with Honours) - BSc (Hons)
- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3 Years
- Leading to a career in
 - Dental hygiene or therapy
- Contact details
 - meddent-admissions@plymouth.ac.uk [13]
 - +44 (0)1752 437333
- Region
 - South West
- Admissions address
 - Drake Circus
 - Plymouth
 - PL4 8AA
 - United Kingdom

Oral Health Science

University of Manchester

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- Qualification
 - Bachelor of Science (with Honours) - BSc (Hons)
- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3 Years
- Leading to a career in
 - Dental hygiene or therapy
- Contact details
 - study@manchester.ac.uk [15]
 - +44 (0)161 275 2077
- Region
 - North West
- Admissions address
 - University Recruitment And Adm
 - Oxford Road
 - Manchester
 - M13 9PL
 - United Kingdom
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Live vacancies

For more NHS vacancies, visit NHS Jobs [17].

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Other roles that may interest you

- Dental nurse [18]
- Dental support worker [19]
- Dentist [20]
- Dental technician/dental technologist [21]

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Links

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