

Notice of Scopes of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications

Issued by the Dental Council pursuant to sections 11 and 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003

Dental Hygiene

Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice

The scope of practice for dental hygiene is set out in the documented “Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Hygiene Practice” produced and published from time to time by the Dental Council.

Dental hygiene practice is a subset of the practice of dentistry, and is commensurate with a dental hygienist’s approved education, training and competence.

A dental hygienist’s major role is in the provision of oral health education and the prevention of oral disease to promote healthy oral behaviours. A dental hygienist’s primary task is in prevention and non-surgical treatment of periodontal diseases. A dental hygienist guides patients’ personal care to maintain sound oral tissues as an integral part of their general health.

Dental hygienists practise in a team situation with clinical guidance provided by a practising dentist or dental specialist¹, though some aspects of the scope of practice are provided under direct clinical supervision².

Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Hygiene Practice

The Dental Council defines the practice of dentistry as the maintenance of health through the assessment, diagnosis, management, treatment and prevention of any disease, disorder or condition of the orofacial complex and associated structures.

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¹ **Clinical guidance** means the professional support and assistance provided to a dental hygienist by a practising dentist or dental specialist as part of the provision of overall integrated care to the patient group. Dental hygienists and dentists or dental specialists normally work from the same premises providing a team approach. Clinical guidance may be provided at a distance but appropriate access must be available to ensure that the dentist or dental specialist is able to provide guidance and advice, when required, and maintain general oversight of the clinical care outcomes of the patient group. Dental hygienists are responsible and accountable for their own clinical practice within their scope of practice but the dentist or dental specialist is responsible and accountable for the clinical guidance provided. Further detail on the working relationship between dental hygienists and dentists will be set out in the relevant Dental Council Code of Practice.

² **Direct clinical supervision** means the clinical supervision provided to a dental hygienist by a practising dentist or dental specialist when the dentist is present on the premises at the time the dental hygiene work is carried out.

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Dental hygiene practice includes teaching, research and management given that such roles influence clinical practice and public safety.

Dental hygiene practice involves the following aspects -

Provided under clinical guidance:

- Obtaining and reassessing medical and dental health histories.
- Examination of oral tissues and recognition of abnormalities.
- Assessing and provisionally diagnosing disease of periodontal tissues, and appropriate referral.
- Obtaining informed consent for dental hygiene care plans.
- Providing oral health education, information, promotion and counselling.
- Scaling, debridement and prophylaxis of supra and subgingival tooth surfaces.
- Applying and dispensing non-prescription preventive agents and fissure sealants.
- Applying and dispensing topical agents for the treatment of tooth surface sensitivity and tooth discolouration.
- Administering topical local anaesthetic.
- Taking impressions, recording occlusal relationships and making study models.
- Taking impressions, constructing and fitting mouthguards and bleaching trays.
- Taking intra and extra-oral photographs.
- Performing postoperative procedures such as removal of sutures and placement and removal of periodontal dressings.
- Recontouring and polishing of restorations.
- Taking periapical and bitewing radiographs for the purpose of recognising disease of the periodontium³.
- Taking extra-oral radiographs.
- Assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures:
 - Tracing cephalometric radiographs.
 - Supragingival polishing of teeth (as part of oral hygiene, before bonding and after removal of fixed attachments).
 - Providing oral hygiene instruction and advice on the care and maintenance of orthodontic appliances.
 - Making study models, and fabricating retainers, and undertaking other simple laboratory procedures of an orthodontic nature.

Provided under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist:

- Applying prescription preventive agents.
- Administering local anaesthetic using dentoalveolar infiltration and inferior dental nerve block techniques.

³ Section 15 of the Radiation Protection Act 1965 requires non-licensed persons who take x-rays to do so under the supervision or instructions of a person who holds a licence under that Act.

- Assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures:
 - Placing separators.
 - Sizing of metal bands and their cementation including loose bands during treatment.
 - Preparation of teeth for the bonding of fixed attachments and fixed retainers.
 - Indirect bonding of brackets as set up by the dentist or dental specialist.
 - Placing archwires as formed by the dentist or dental specialist when necessary and replacing ligatures /closing self ligating brackets.
 - Removing archwires after removing elastomeric or wire ligatures, or opening self ligating brackets.
 - Removing fixed orthodontic attachments and retainers.
 - Removing adhesives after the removal of fixed attachments using burs in slow speed handpieces where there is minimal potential for the removal of enamel.
 - Trial fitting of removable appliances. This does not include activation.
 - Fitting of passive removable retainers.
 - Bonding preformed fixed retainers.

Prescribed Qualifications

1. Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago; or
2. Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health, Auckland University of Technology; or
3. Certificate in Dental Hygiene issued by Otago Polytechnic and approved experience in the provision of oral health services within the scope of dental hygiene practice; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
4. New Zealand Defence Force training programme in Dental Hygiene and approved experience in the provision of oral health services within the scope of dental hygiene practice; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
5. Diploma in Dental Hygiene issued by a New Zealand educational institution; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
6. Diploma in Dental Hygiene, University of Otago (Orthodontic Procedures conferred from 2002) and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic and Extra-oral Radiography, or
7. Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Hygiene), University of Otago; or
8. an undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma from the Australian Dental Council or Dental Board of Australia accredited educational institution that included education in Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic

- Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography and registration in Australia⁴; or
9. an undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma, or undergraduate dental degree; and a pass in the Dental Council Dental Hygiene Registration Examination; or
 10. an undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma or undergraduate dental degree and a pass in the USA National Board Dental Hygiene Examination or Canadian National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination and a pass in a USA or Canadian regional or state board dental hygiene clinical examination; and registration with a USA or Canadian dental authority; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
 11. a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CDA) accredited undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma; a pass in the USA National Board Dental Hygiene Examination or Canadian National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination; and registration with a USA or Canadian dental authority; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
 12. a General Dental Council (GDC) accredited undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma from the United Kingdom; and registration with the GDC; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
 13. a Certificate or Diploma in Dental Hygiene conferred by the GDC; and registration with the GDC; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography.

⁴ With the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in 2010 all Australian State Licensing Boards were replaced by the Dental Board of Australia.