

Scope of practice for dental therapy

The practice of dental therapy is the provision of oral health assessment, diagnosis, management, treatment and prevention of any disease, disorder or condition of the orofacial complex and associated structures in accordance with ~~this scope of practice, and~~ a dental therapist's approved education, training, experience and competence. Dental therapy services are provided to children and adolescents up to age 18.

Disease prevention, oral health promotion and maintenance are core activities, aimed at achieving and maintaining oral health as an integral part of general health.

~~The scope of practice encompasses the dental therapist competencies.~~

~~Dental therapy practice includes:~~

- ~~• obtaining medical histories and consulting with other health practitioners as appropriate~~
- ~~• examination of oral tissues, diagnosis of dental caries and recognition of abnormalities~~
- ~~• preparation of an oral care plan~~
- ~~• informed consent procedures~~
- ~~• administration of local anaesthetic using dentoalveolar infiltration, inferior dental nerve block and topical local anaesthetic techniques~~
- ~~• preparation of cavities and restoration of primary and permanent teeth using direct placement of appropriate dental materials~~
- ~~• extraction of primary teeth~~
- ~~• pulp capping in primary and permanent teeth~~
- ~~• preventive dentistry including cleaning, polishing and scaling (to remove deposits in association with gingivitis), fissure sealants, and fluoride applications~~
- ~~• oral health education and promotion~~
- ~~• taking of impressions for, constructing and fitting mouthguards¹~~
- ~~• referral as necessary to the appropriate practitioner/agency~~
- ~~• performing pulpotomies on primary teeth~~
- ~~• taking and interpreting periapical and bitewing radiographs~~
- ~~• preparing teeth for and placing stainless steel crowns on primary teeth.~~

Practice in this context goes wider than clinical dental therapy practice to include teaching, research, and management, given that such roles influence clinical practice and public safety. Areas of dental therapy practice which were not included in a practitioner's training should not be undertaken unless the practitioner has completed appropriate training and practises to the standards required by the Standards Framework for Oral Health Practitioners.

~~*1 Dental therapists who have not received training in this area as part of their undergraduate programme can undertake this activity only in accordance with the Dental Council's Standards Framework for Oral Health Practitioners*~~