Dental Hygienists help people improve their dental health. They work under the general supervision of a Dentist, cleaning and polishing teeth, noting conditions of decay and disease for diagnosis by Dentists, and taking and developing x-rays. They may administer anesthesia and perform other procedures as directed by a dentist. They also teach patients proper dental care and may sterilize instruments and keep records. Recently, Hygienists have been allowed to examine patients who are unable to come into the Dentist's office for checkups. Registered Dental Hygienists in extended function (RDHEF) are permitted to perform a few more skilled tasks.

**PREREQUISITE COURSEWORK REQUIRED BY MOST DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Required Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One semester of English</td>
<td>English 110/120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Chemistry and/or Organic Chemistry with lab</td>
<td>Chemistry 101 and/or Chemistry 104 (Varies according to campus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Anatomy with laboratory</td>
<td>Bio-Medical Science 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Physiology with laboratory</td>
<td>Bio-Medical Science 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Microbiology with laboratory</td>
<td>Bio-Medical Science 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Introduction to Psychology</td>
<td>Psychology 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Introduction to Sociology</td>
<td>Sociology 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester of Oral Communication</td>
<td>Communication 131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All courses should be taken for a letter grade, not Pass/No Pass.

**Dental Hygiene School Selection Criteria**

- A high school diploma or GED may be required by the school.
- Successful completion of all prerequisite coursework with a minimum “C” or better grade.
- Grade point average of all general prerequisite college courses, prerequisite science courses and overall college GPA from all institutions attended.
- Previous dental experience and licenses.
There are both Associate and Bachelor degree programs in dental hygiene to prepare for careers in this field. The Associates degree program leads to a career in a clinic or private office while the Bachelor degree program leads to careers in dental public health, teaching and makes the individual more marketable for jobs. Additionally, there are Master degree programs which lead to careers in dental hygiene education. Dental hygiene education consists of four areas of study: basic education, basic science, dental science, and dental hygiene classes.

**Salary Information**
In 2013, the average annual wage in California was $93,920 with most people making between $62,270 and $118,980 according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

**Recommended Websites**
American Dental Association  www.ada.org
American Dental Education Association  www.adea.org
American Dental Hygienists' Association  www.adha.org
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions  www.asahp.org
California Dental Association  www.cda.org

**Select Dental Hygiene School Websites**
Oxnard College  www.oxnardcollege.edu/departments/academic/dental-hygiene-program
Pasadena City College  www.pasadena.edu/divisions/health-sciences/dental-hygiene/index.cfm
University of Southern California  www.dentistry.usc.edu/programs/dental-hygiene/
University of California San Francisco  www.dentistry.ucsf.edu/admissions/ms-in-dental-hygiene
West Los Angeles College  www.wlac.edu/Allied-Health/Dental-Hygiene.aspx

*Note: Requirements is subject to change without notice. Check the individual Dental Hygiene school for the most up to date information.*