

Dental Hygienist

Clean teeth, catch gum disease, coach patients. Good hourly pay after 2 to 3 years of college.

TYPICAL PAY

\$94,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$67k to \$125k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Dental clinics, public health units,
long-term care homes**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, English and a math. Public college programs are competitive.
- 2 Dental hygiene diploma or degree** 2 to 3 years
2 to 3 years at a college or university. Half classroom, half clinic treating real patients. Some programs want a year of university science first.
- 3 NDHCE (National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination)** After graduation
One national written exam, run by the FDHRC (Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada) and offered a few times a year.
- 4 Register with your provincial college** A few weeks
For example the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario. Some provinces add a short law and ethics test.

Pros and cons

- + Good hourly pay after only 2 to 3 years of school
- + Daytime hours, no nights or on-call
- + Easy to work part time or 4 days a week
- Wrist, neck and back strain is very common
- Pay flattens early
- Often no pension or benefits

Good to know

Mostly women

Around 97% of dental hygienists in Canada are women. It is one of the most female professions in health care.

No dentist required

Since 2007, Ontario hygienists have been allowed to open their own clinics. Some run mobile practices that bring cleanings to nursing homes and remote communities.

Optional boosts

Independent practice. Restorative or orthodontic modules. Local anaesthesia. Bachelor's degree bridge.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Dental hygienists, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada: NDHCE fee schedule
Canadian Dental Hygienists Association
College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/dental-hygienist>



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