

Dentist

Fix teeth, run a clinic, earn well. Eight years of school and a lot of debt first.

TYPICAL PAY**\$160,000**

a year, full time

PAY RANGE**\$110k to \$300k**

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY**6 to 8 years**

after high school

DEMAND**Good**

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED**Yes**

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK**Private dental clinics, hospitals,
public health units**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics, math and English. Marks matter a lot.
- 2 University science courses** 2 to 4 years
Dental schools want at least 2 to 3 years of university. Most people who get in have finished a full degree.
- 3 DAT (dental aptitude test)** One day
A half-day test of science, reading and perceptual ability. Written in your second or third year of university.
- 4 Dental school** 4 years
Four years for a DDS (doctor of dental surgery) or DMD (doctor of dental medicine) at one of 10 Canadian schools. Two years of science and lab work, then two years treating real patients under supervision.
- 5 NDEB (National Dental Examining Board) exam and provincial licence** A few months
Pass the national certification exam, then register with your provincial dental college. Then you can work.

Pros and cons

- + High pay, and higher still if you own the clinic
- + Regular daytime hours, rarely nights or on-call
- + You see the result of your work right away
- Very expensive and very competitive to get in
- Back, neck and wrist strain from bending over patients all day
- Many patients are scared of you

Good to know

A federal dental plan changed the market

The Canadian Dental Care Plan started in 2024 and covers millions of lower-income Canadians who had no dental insurance. It is the biggest new source of dental patients in decades.

Only 10 dental schools

Canada's 10 dental schools graduate only just over 500 new dentists a year between them. Every school gets far more applicants than it has seats.

Optional boosts

Orthodontist. Oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Pediatric dentist. Endodontist or periodontist.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Dentists, wages (updated Nov 2025)

National Dental Examining Board of Canada: fees

Canadian Dental Association: Dental Aptitude Test

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/dentist>



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