

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

The dentist who became a surgeon: wisdom teeth, jaw surgery, facial fractures and implants. Dental school, then a 4 to 6 year hospital residency.

TYPICAL PAY

\$400,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$200k to \$700k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

10 to 14 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Private surgical offices, hospital operating rooms, trauma centres,...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Top marks in biology, chemistry, math and English. Dental school admission is roughly as hard as medical school.
- 2 University** 2 to 4 years
Most dental schools want 2 to 4 years of science courses with a high GPA (grade point average). Write the DAT (Dental Aptitude Test).
- 3 Dental school** 4 years
The DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) or DMD (Doctor of Dental Medicine). Classes, then years of treating patients in the school clinic. Get to know the oral surgery department early.
- 4 Oral and maxillofacial surgery residency** 4 to 6 years
Hospital-based, 4 to 6 years. You rotate through general surgery, anesthesia and internal medicine with the medical residents, then spend years in oral surgery. Some Canadian programs run 6 years and include a medical degree.
- 5 Specialty exam and licence** End of residency
Pass the NDSE (National Dental Specialty Examination) run by the Royal College of Dentists of Canada, then register as a specialist with your provincial dental regulator.

Pros and cons

- + Surgeon's income with more control over your hours than most surgeons
- + A mix of office procedures and real hospital surgery
- + Results you can see: a straight jaw, a pain-free mouth
- Dental school debt is among the highest of any degree
- A tiny number of residency spots across Canada
- You are responsible for sedation as well as the surgery

Good to know

Wisdom teeth pay the bills

Removing impacted wisdom teeth, usually four at a time under sedation, is the most common operation an oral surgeon does. Some offices do a dozen cases in a morning.

Some are dentist and doctor

A few Canadian oral surgery residencies run 6 years and include a medical degree, so the graduate holds both a dental and a medical doctorate. The 4-year programs skip the medical degree and reach t...

Optional boosts

Head and neck cancer and reconstruction. Cleft and craniofacial surgery. Cosmetic facial surgery. Implants and bone grafting.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Surgeons, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Canadian Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
Royal College of Dentists of Canada (specialty exams)
Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, Western University

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/oral-and-maxillofacial-surgeon>



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