

# Other Dental Professions

The dental profession is comprised of a variety of careers beyond dentists, each with its own unique skills and education requirements. Here's an overview of some of the careers in the dental profession.

## DENTAL HYGIENIST

Dental hygienists work closely with dentists to provide preventative oral care to patients. They perform tasks such as cleaning teeth, taking X-rays and educating patients on proper oral hygiene practices.

Dental hygienists typically have an associate's degree in dental hygiene and must be licensed in their state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the median annual wage for dental hygienists in 2020 was \$77,090.

## DENTAL ASSISTANT

Dental assistants work alongside dentists during patient procedures. They may prepare equipment, take X-rays, and assist in patient care.

Dental assistants typically need a high school diploma or equivalent and may receive on-the-job training. Some states require dental assistants to have formal education and



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certification. The BLS reports that the median annual wage for dental assistants in 2020 was \$40,080.

## DENTAL LAB TECHNICIAN

Dental lab technicians work in laboratories to create custom dental prosthetics, such as dentures, bridges and crowns. They use molds of patients' teeth to create custom prosthetics that fit properly and match the patient's natural teeth.

Dental lab technicians typically need an associate's degree in dental laboratory technology and must be

detail-oriented and have strong technical skills. The BLS reports that the median annual wage for dental lab technicians in 2020 was \$42,910.

## DENTAL ANESTHESIOLOGIST

Dental anesthesiologists are responsible for administering anesthesia to patients undergoing dental procedures. They may use general anesthesia to put patients to sleep or local anesthesia to numb specific areas of the mouth.

Dental anesthesiologists must have a degree in anesthesiology and be licensed in their

state. The BLS does not provide salary information specifically for dental anesthesiologists, but anesthesiologists in general earned a median annual wage of \$369,346 in 2020.

## DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH SPECIALIST

Dental public health specialists work to improve the oral health of entire communities. They may work with public health agencies, schools, or government organizations to develop and implement programs that promote oral health.

Dental public health special-

ists typically have a degree in public health or a related field and may need additional dental training. The BLS reports that the median annual wage for health educators and community health workers, which includes dental public health specialists, was \$48,140 in 2020.

The dental profession offers a variety of rewarding careers beyond dentists. Whether you're interested in preventative care, helping with medical technology or community health, there's a career path in the dental profession that may be right for you.