

DENTAL HYGIENIST

Dental hygienists are the employees who help patients maintain good dental care by cleaning and polishing their teeth and educating them about proper dental care.

CAREER LADDERS

Employment opportunities in the health care field are currently at an exceptionally high level. No matter what the state of the economy, the demand for health care professionals will continue to grow. Individuals can start in entry-level occupations and advance their careers while enjoying the stability of employment. Also, individuals can start at the mid or advanced levels, depending on their education, training, and career goals. At each of the levels, there are many opportunities for more challenging and higher paying positions.

SAGINAW VALLEY

Each ladder depicts a series of work experiences that leads to more challenging and higher paying opportunities. While every level of the ladder can provide a satisfying job, some employees will choose to gain even more skills and responsibilities that will advance them in their careers. To do so, they will need more education, training, and work experiences. Some jobs will require a certificate, a license, or an advanced degree.

CLIMBING THE CAREER LADDER

ADVANCED LEVEL

Associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree required; must graduate from an accredited program; must obtain license or certification

Physical Therapist
\$23.31-\$33.68/hour

Dental Hygienist
\$21.96-\$32.48/hour

MID LEVEL

Associate's degree or graduation from an accredited program required; must obtain a license or certification

Physical Therapist Assistant
\$14.55-\$20.57/hour

Medical Records Technician
\$9.40-\$14.71

Respiratory Therapist
\$16.55-\$22.18

ENTRY LEVEL

Most occupations require a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma (GED), three to six months training, and knowledge of medical terminology; certification is required in some of the occupations

Home Health Aide
\$6.65-\$9.06/hour

Billers and Coders
\$7.65-\$24.46

Dental Assistant
\$8.35-\$16.20

Wages will vary within this occupation based on the employee's education, training, and years of experience.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Each occupation is described in terms of specific tasks and typical job duties.

A DENTAL HYGIENIST MUST BE ABLE TO:

- Screen patients for dentists
- Take and develop dental x-rays
- Remove soft and hard deposits from teeth
- Teach patients how to practice good oral hygiene to maintain oral health, such as tooth brushing, flossing and nutritional counseling
- Apply preventive materials to the teeth, such as sealants and fluorides
- Make impressions of patients' teeth, which are models of the teeth to be used by the dentist to evaluate patient treatment needs
- Work as a member of the dental health team in the delivery of dental care to patients

WAGES

Wage information was obtained from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth and from local employers to give a general idea of the wages and salaries for this occupation.

ADVANCED-LEVEL WAGE

\$21.96-\$32.48/hour

WORKING CONDITIONS

Dental hygienists work under the supervision of dentists. Most dental hygienists work in private dental practices. However, they may also be employed in hospitals, clinics, public health agencies, schools, and private industry. Dental hygienists work in well-lit and clean environments. Because dental hygienists may be exposed to infectious diseases from their patients, they must wear protective gloves, masks, and eyewear. Many dental hygienists work in more than one office on a part-time basis. Most work about 35 hours per week and may work in the evenings or on weekends.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Courses, programs, and certificates that are needed for employment are offered by local education and training providers.



HIGH SCHOOL

- Completion of high school's Health Sciences Career Pathway requirements and/or appropriate career and technical education classes
- English
- Speech
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Health
- Nutrition
- First aid/CPR
- Career studies, such as the medical career program at the Saginaw Career Complex or the dental occupations program at the Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

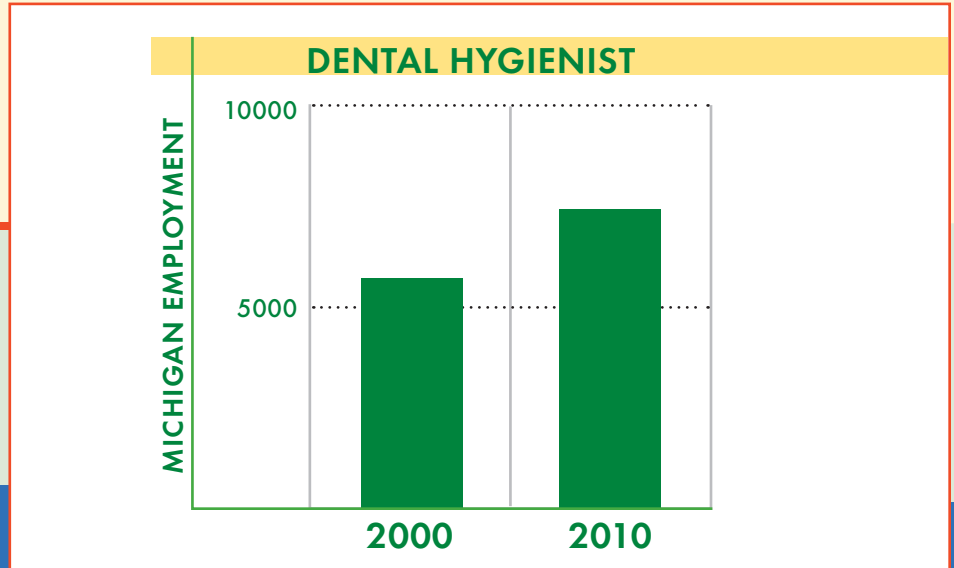
- Delta College, associate's degree in applied science – dental hygiene or a dual associate's degree in applied science and business studies – dental assisting/general management

LOCAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Local school districts
- Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center
- Saginaw Career Complex
- Delta College

JOB OUTLOOK

The rate of growth within this occupation is projected by data from local employers and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.



ADVANCEMENT

Depending upon the level of education and experience achieved, dental hygienists can also apply their skills and knowledge to other career activities such as teaching hygiene to students in dental schools and dental hygiene education programs. Other career options include: research, office management, and business administration. Additionally, employment opportunities may be available with companies that market dental-related materials and equipment.

WHAT THE EMPLOYER SAID



WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE FOR THIS POSITION?

"Dental hygienists are important members of the dental health care team. They must have the knowledge and clinical skills that they learned in their dental hygienist program, be licensed by the State of Michigan, and want to continually learn on the job. I only hire mature people. Most people usually become mature after they complete their education. Dental hygienists do more than clean teeth. They are a very important part of preventative dentistry and good health. We usually see patients twice a year, so I look for someone who has good people skills to help the patients want to come back to our office."

Dr. Timothy Murphy DDS, dentist
Timothy Murphy DDS

STAR PROFILE

This interview is intended to show you what is needed to be a star employee.



EMPLOYEE:
CAROL RYGWELSKI

OCCUPATION:
**REGISTERED DENTAL
HYGIENIST**

COMPANY:
TIMOTHY MURPHY DDS

TELL US HOW YOU ATTAINED YOUR CURRENT POSITION.

When I started my career, I wanted a job working with people, where I could make a good wage as a full-time or part-time employee. My sister-in-law was a hygienist so I was able to learn a lot about the occupation from her. This is a great career field and you can work full time or part time and do well. I decided this is what I wanted to do so I earned my associate's degree and passed the certification exam. My sister-in-law told me about an opening at Dr. Murphy's office. I applied for the job and was hired.

DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY.

After I arrive at work, I look at the day's schedule for appointments. I review the patients' charts to see what they need. I then clean and sterilize my instruments and set up the room for the first patient. During a typical day, I perform a wide variety of tasks such as examining, cleaning and polishing teeth; giving fluoride treatments; taking X-rays; and calming nervous patients.

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE SOMEONE A "STAR" IN THIS OCCUPATION?

A star is someone who really listens to people and watches them for signals about how they are feeling. A star must have good people skills and be a team player that goes the extra mile to help fellow co-workers out.

WHAT TRAINING AND EDUCATION DID YOU NEED TO ENTER THIS POSITION?

I needed an associate's degree. I earned an associate's degree in applied science – dental hygienist from Delta College. I also passed the certification exam.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST/LEAST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I love working with all kinds of people. In our office we have patients from 3 year olds to 80 year olds. I see a little bit of everything so everyday is different. The thing I like least about my job is that after a long day, it can be physically tiring, especially in your neck and arms.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE SOMEONE SEEKING A JOB IN YOUR FIELD?

I recommend that students take science, anatomy, and psychology classes to become a hygienist. I also recommend that they volunteer at a nursery school or senior care facility to learn how to work with people of all ages.

ARE THERE ANY LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS NEEDED FOR YOUR POSITION?

A dental hygienist must pass a national board examination and a state examination, as well as be licensed by the State Department of Health.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Career Ladders project began as a Saginaw County Vision 2020 initiative. To date, more than 300 individuals have been involved in the project. It is impossible to list them all, but the Comprehensive Education and Workforce Development Committee appreciates each one and the incredible participation by our major employers and educational institutions, as well as the support from the Arnold and Gertrude Boutell Memorial Fund, The Dow Chemical Company, The Dow Corning Foundation, the Fordney Club, the Hospital Council of East Central Michigan, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, the National Tooling and Machining Association – Saginaw Valley Chapter, the Saginaw Community Foundation, the Saginaw County Business and Education Partnership, the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Saginaw County's local school districts, Saginaw County's Promise, the Saginaw County Vision 2020, the Saginaw Future Inc., the Saginaw/Midland/Bay Michigan Works!, the Saginaw Township Business Association, the Saginaw Valley Manufacturers' Association, and the Saginaw Valley Tech Prep Partnership. We also want to thank NOVA for their guidance.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/PROGRAM. AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.