

DENTIST



SALARY

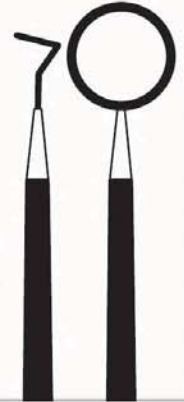
Newly qualified dentist ★★★★★
Senior dental practitioner ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Good job prospects and opportunities for career advancement • High salaries • Continued growth in demand for dental services • Strong competition for training programs and residencies

JOB DESCRIPTION

Dentists diagnose and treat damage, disease, and decay to the teeth, gums, and mouth, and provide cosmetic treatments to improve their appearance. They also educate and advise patients on effective cleaning techniques, mouth hygiene, and diet to maintain oral and dental health. Dentists might work in a hospital to carry out reconstructive surgery for patients with facial injuries, or perform routine dental care in a clinic.



AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Medicine • Biology • Chemistry • Physics • Biochemistry • Anatomy • English • Information Technology (IT) • Public health



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A degree in dentistry is required. Work experience, such as shadowing a dentist, will help when applying for courses.



LIFESTYLE Work hours vary by practice, and may include evening or weekend duties, and periods on call over public holidays.



LOCATION Most dentists work in a consulting room within a private dental practice, a hospital, or a clinic. Travel for work purposes is rare.



THE REALITIES Dentists might have to work with patients who are unhygienic or who have oral diseases. Some patients might become stressed during treatment.

CAREER PATHS

Aspiring dentist can expect to undergo years of extensive training. Most dentists work on a self-employed basis as general practice dentists, owning or being a partner in a clinic. Switching between general practice and hospital dentistry is less common.

UNDERGRADUATE If your grades do not meet the minimum level required for entry into dental school, you may find it helpful to take a year-long foundation course before applying again.



DENTAL SCHOOL GRADUATE You will need to take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) and complete an accredited dental school program for a degree in dentistry in order to practice.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **MEDICAL DOCTOR** *see pp. 276–277*
- ▶ **OPTOMETRIST** *see pp. 294–295*
- ▶ **DENTAL HYGIENIST** Advises patients on how to look after their teeth and gums to help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Dental hygienists use dental instruments to clean and polish patients' teeth and to remove dental plaque.
- ▶ **DENTAL TECHNICIAN** Designs and constructs a range of dental devices to repair decaying teeth, replace lost teeth, and to improve the general appearance of teeth. Although technicians work closely with dentists, they have limited contact with patients.

SKILLS GUIDE

-  Excellent communication skills to interact with patients and explain treatments to them.
-  Strong leadership abilities for recruiting, training, and managing a dental practice team.
-  Good interpersonal skills to understand patients' problems and to put them at ease.
-  Excellent manual dexterity for carrying out intricate dental work using medical instruments.
-  Attention to detail and precision to ensure that treatments are administered accurately.



ORTHODONTIST Corrects the abnormal alignment of the teeth and jaws by fitting dental appliances, such as dental braces and space retainers.



MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON Offers reconstructive surgery to patients who have defects or injuries—such as cleft palates, accident injury, or cancers—to the mouth, teeth, jaws, and face.



DENTIST The requirements for becoming a licensed dentist vary by state. To specialize, you will need to undergo up to six years of further training in your chosen specialization.



HOSPITAL DENTIST Treats patients in a hospital setting, carrying out complex dental and surgical procedures. Hospital dentists may specialize in restorative surgery, or in pediatric dentistry—treating children—for example.



PUBLIC HEALTH DENTIST Assesses the dental needs of a region, rather than of an individual patient. Also gives advice on preventing dental disease, and ensures that dental services meet public needs.



COMMUNITY DENTIST Works at health centers, mobile clinics, or care homes to offer dental care to children, people with special needs or physical disabilities, and the elderly.