

Dental Hygiene Profession in Canada



Revised: May 2021

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About *Dental Hygiene Profession in Canada*: To practise in Canada, dental hygienists must be registered or licensed by the appropriate provincial or territorial dental hygiene regulatory authority. Requirements for registration or licensure, including clinical experience, examinations, and ongoing professional development, vary by province or territory. This document helps readers understand the dental hygiene profession in Canada.

The information collected is accurate from the time it was collected, May 2021.

For more information, contact info@cdha.ca.

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Regulation and licensure of health care professionals falls to the provinces and territories in Canada. The laws and regulations define the entry to practice requirements and the scope of practice for dental hygienists in the specified jurisdiction. As a result, there are variations in legal scopes of practice and autonomy across Canada. If you are looking for more specific information pertinent to a particular jurisdiction, please contact the regulatory body directly.

The scope of dental hygiene practice describes the roles, procedures, actions, and processes that a registered dental hygienist is educated, competent, and authorized to perform. Each province/territory enacts its own legislation determining the services dental hygienists can provide and under what conditions. These services are directed towards attaining and maintaining optimal oral health for individuals and communities. In this context, the process of care model (ADPIE—Assess, Diagnose, Plan, Implement, and Evaluate) underpins the decision making within dental hygiene care. Each phase in the process of care is essential for the delivery of safe and effective dental hygiene services.

For more information on the scope of practice in a particular province or territory, please contact the regulatory body in that jurisdiction.

| | Jurisdiction | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | NU |
| Regulatory Body | British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals (BCCOHP) | College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta (CRDHA) | Saskatchewan Dental Hygienists' Association (SDHA) | College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba (CDHM) | College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) | Ordre des hygiénistes dentaires du Québec (web site in French only) | New Brunswick College of Dental Hygienists (NBCDH) | College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia (CDHNS) | Dental Council of Prince Edward Island (DCPEI) | Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dental Hygienists (NLCDH) | Government of Yukon | Northwest Territories Professional Licensing Government of NWT | Department of Health Government of Nunavut |
| Year Became Self-Regulated | 1995 | 1990 | 1998 | 2005 | 1994 | 1975 | 2009 | 2009 | N/A | 2013 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Legislation | Health Professions Act | Health Professions Act | Dental Disciplines Act | The Dental Hygienists Act | Dental Hygiene Act Regulated Health Professions Act | C-26 Professional Code | New Brunswick Dental Hygienists Act | Dental Hygienists Act | Dental Profession Act | Health Professions Act | Dental Profession Act | Dental Auxiliaries Act | Dental Auxiliaries Act |
| Regulations | Dental Hygienists Regulation | Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation | SDHA Regulatory Bylaws | Dental Hygienists Regulation | Regulations under the Dental Hygiene Act | See C-26 Professional Code | Rules under the New Brunswick Dental Hygienists Act | Dental Hygienists Regulations | Bylaws of the Dental Association & Dental Council of PEI | Dental Hygienists Regulations under the Health Professions Act | See Dental Profession Act | See Dental Auxiliaries Act | See Dental Auxiliaries Act |

*BC=British Columbia, AB=Alberta, SK=Saskatchewan, MB=Manitoba, ON=Ontario, QC=Québec, NB=New Brunswick, NS=Nova Scotia, PE=Prince Edward Island, NL=Newfoundland and Labrador, YT=Yukon Territory, NT=Northwest Territories, NU=Nunavut

| | Jurisdiction | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|------|------|------|
| | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | NU |
| Quality Assurance Program | Quality Assurance Program | Continuing Competence Program | Continuing Competency Program | Continuing Competency Program | Quality Assurance Program | Mandatory Continuing Education Policy (web site in French only) | Continuing Competencies and Education Program | Continuing Competency | Bylaws of the Dental Association & Dental Council of PEI | Continuing Education and Professional Development Policy | None | None | None |
| Requirements for Professional Liability Insurance | \$1 million | \$1 million | \$1 million | \$3 million aggregate | \$1 million per claim; \$5 million aggregate | \$1 million | \$1 million | \$2 million aggregate | \$1 million | \$1 million | None | None | None |

Number of Dental Hygienists as of 2019¹

| | Jurisdiction | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|--------------|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-------|--------|
| | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | | NU |
| Total No. of Registered Dental Hygienists | 4,172 | 3,279 | 663* | 773 | 13,694 | 6,712 | 517 | 749 | 95* | 233 | | 84 | | 30,219 |

¹ Canadian Institute for Health Information. Canada's Health Care Providers, 2015 to 2019 — Data Tables. Ottawa, ON: CIHI; 2021.

*No new data reported for 2019.

Number of Accredited Dental Hygiene Programs²

| | Jurisdiction | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|----------------------|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|
| | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | | NU |
| Public Institutions | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 6 | | 1 | | | | | | 27 |
| Private Institutions | 1 | | | | 6 | | 1 | | | | | | | 8 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 35 |

² Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada. Search for accredited programs. Available at https://www.cda-adc.ca/cdacweb/en/search_for_accredited_programs/. Cited May 2021.

Non-accredited dental hygiene programs in Canada: 3.

Dental Hygiene Programs in Canada

| Credential Awarded | Jurisdiction | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|
| | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | | NU |
| Diploma in dental hygiene (includes advanced diplomas) | 5 | | 1 | 1 | 18 | 9 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 36 |
| Baccalaureate degree specific to dental hygiene (including both entry-to-practice and degree-completion pathways) | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 4 |
| Master's degree specific to dental hygiene | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |