

Dental Hygiene Profession in Canada



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THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

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About *Dental Hygiene Profession in Canada*: In order 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 compare and understand the differences in dental hygiene regulation across Canada.

Unless otherwise indicated, this document uses information provided by Canada’s dental hygiene regulatory authorities. CDHA endeavours to collect information from all Canadian dental hygiene regulatory authorities for the given year.

For more information, contact info@cdha.ca.

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Dental Hygiene Profession in Canada: Regulation

Regulation and licensure of health care professionals falls to the provinces and territories in Canada. The laws and regulations define 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. The following tables highlight some of these variations.

	Jurisdiction												
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
Regulatory Body	College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia (CDHBC)	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)	Order of Quebec Dental Hygienists (OHDQ) (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	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 Hygienists 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	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 2018¹

	Jurisdiction													
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Total No. of Registered Dental Hygienists	3,486	3,250	663	758	12,903	6,571	508	713	95	220	84			29,251

¹ Canadian Institute for Health Information. Canada’s Health Care Providers, 2014 to 2018 — Data Tables. Ottawa, ON: CIHI; 2020.

Accredited Dental Hygiene Programs²

	Jurisdiction													
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Public Institutions	4	1	1	1	12	6		1						26
Private Institutions	1				6		1							8
Total														34

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 March 2020.

Note: There are four additional programs in Canada that are not accredited.

	Jurisdiction													
Credential Awarded	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Diploma in dental hygiene (includes advanced diplomas)	4		1	1	18	6	1	1						32
Baccalaureate degree specific to dental hygiene (including both entry-to-practice and degree-completion pathways)	1	1		1				1						4

Note: The University of Alberta offers an [MSc in Medical Sciences \(Dental Hygiene\)](#).

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.

Universally accepted clinical procedures provided by dental hygienists across the country include, but are not limited to, debridement and periodontal therapy, application of antimicrobial and anticariogenic agents, stain removal, and application of pit and fissure sealants. The chart below represents additional services and procedures that are specific to certain provinces or territories. For a complete description of all dental hygiene services in Canada, please refer to the [CDHA National List of Service Codes](#). For clarification regarding the scope of practice in each jurisdiction, contact the appropriate regulatory authority.

Variations in Scope of Practice

	Jurisdiction												
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
Administer local anesthesia	✓*	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Administer nitrous oxide		✓											
Diagnose caries		✓											
Have prescribing authority		✓			✓			✓					
Prescribe radiographs	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				✓	
Perform orthodontic procedures in conjunction with a dentist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Perform orofacial myofunctional therapy	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					
Place permanent restorative materials in conjunction with a dentist		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Place temporary restorative materials independent of a dentist (Includes interim stabilization therapy & atraumatic restorative treatment)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Use lasers for periodontal therapy	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓					

*If certified

	Jurisdiction												
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
Limitations on practice			Contract with dentist or employer with formal referral process with dentist	Supervision requirement for registrants with less than 3,000 practice hours, and restrictions in practice settings	Order requirement for registrants not approved to self-initiate	Under a dentist's supervision	Supervision from a dentist required if the registrant has not completed the self-initiation module. Protocols for local anesthesia.	Order requirement until completion of self-initiation module (which is to be completed within 2 years of being issued an initial licence under the Act)	Under direct control and supervision of a dentist		Under direction of the dentist following their dental examination	Under direction and control of a dentist who assumes direct professional responsibility for the clients for whom the services are being provided	Under direction and control of a dentist who assumes direct professional responsibility for the clients for whom the services are being provided