

# Dental Hygiene Profession in Canada



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



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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 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	<a href="#">College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia (CDHBC)</a>	<a href="#">College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta (CRDHA)</a>	<a href="#">Saskatchewan Dental Hygienists' Association (SDHA)</a>	<a href="#">College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba (CDHM)</a>	<a href="#">College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO)</a>	<a href="#">Order of Quebec Dental Hygienists (OHDQ)</a> (web site in French only)	<a href="#">New Brunswick College of Dental Hygienists (NBCDH)</a>	<a href="#">College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia (CDHNS)</a>	<a href="#">Dental Council of Prince Edward Island (DCPEI)</a>	<a href="#">Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dental Hygienists (NLCDH)</a>	<a href="#">Government of Yukon</a>	<a href="#">Northwest Territories Professional Licensing, Government of NWT</a>	<a href="#">Department of Health Government of Nunavut</a>
Year became Self-regulated	1995	1990	1998	2005	1994	1975	2009	2009	N/A	2013	N/A	N/A	N/A
Legislation	<a href="#">Health Professions Act</a>	<a href="#">Health Professions Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Disciplines Act</a>	<a href="#">The Dental Hygienists Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Hygiene Act</a>	<a href="#">C-26 Professional Code</a>	<a href="#">An Act Respecting the New Brunswick College of Dental Hygienists</a>	<a href="#">Dental Hygienists Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Profession Act</a>	<a href="#">Health Professions Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Profession Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Auxiliaries Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Auxiliaries Act</a>
Regulations	<a href="#">Dental Hygienists Regulation</a>	<a href="#">Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation</a>	<a href="#">SDHA Regulatory Bylaws</a>	<a href="#">Dental Hygienists Regulation</a>	<a href="#">Regulations under the Dental Hygienists Act</a>	<a href="#">See C-26 Professional Code</a>	<a href="#">Rules under the New Brunswick Dental Hygienists Act</a>	<a href="#">Dental Hygienists Regulations</a>	<a href="#">By-Laws of the Dental Association &amp; Dental Council of PEI</a>	<a href="#">Dental Hygienists Regulations under the Health Professions Act</a>	<a href="#">See Dental Profession Act</a>	<a href="#">See Dental Auxiliaries Act</a>	<a href="#">See Dental Auxiliaries Act</a>

\*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	<a href="#">Quality Assurance Program</a>	<a href="#">Continuing Competence Program</a>	<a href="#">Continuing Competency Program</a>	<a href="#">Continuing Competency Program</a>	<a href="#">Quality Assurance Program</a>	<a href="#">Mandatory Continuing Education Policy</a>	<a href="#">Continuing Competencies and Education Program</a>	<a href="#">Continuing Competency</a>	<a href="#">Bylaws of the Dental Association &amp; Dental Council of PEI</a>	<a href="#">Continuing Education and Professional Development Policy</a>	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 2017<sup>1</sup>

	Jurisdiction													
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Total no. of registered dental hygienists	3,748	3,176	644	740	13,150	6,472	508	736	92	221	62			29,549

<sup>1</sup>The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) Health Personnel Provincial Profiles.

Accredited Dental Hygiene Programs<sup>2</sup>

	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

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cda-adc.ca/cdacweb/en/search\\_for\\_accredited\\_programs/](https://www.cda-adc.ca/cdacweb/en/search_for_accredited_programs/)

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		✓											
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	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓					

	Jurisdiction												
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
Limitations on practice	365-day rule for non-exempt registrants and supervision requirement during administration of local anesthesia		Contract with dentist or employer with formal referral process with dentist	<a href="#">Supervision requirement for registrants with less than 3,000 practice hours and restrictions in practice settings</a>	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 registration)	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