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Dental Hygienist   
Job Description

Revised February 2021

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*The following job description and job duties are intended as general information and guidelines only. They may or may not conform with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations or the frequent updates to such. They also may not conform or apply to the latest updates in dental procedures, equipment, use of equipment.*

*This job description is not a substitute for*

* *proper legal or other professional or regulatory advice*
* *knowledge of best equipment, equipment procedures, and handbooks*
* *technically proper practices of dentistry and patient care*
* *any other professional, equipment, or regulatory advice for specific procedures and/or situations, including compliance with all HIPAA, EPA, and OSHA laws and regulations*

*Before implementing anything in this job description, it is the sole responsibility of each practice, its owner(s), and its employees to consult with attorneys, applicable governing and regulatory boards, government agencies, and equipment manufacturers in order to obtain and ensure that they have a full understanding of all the laws, rules, and regulations governing their practice, as well as knowledge of the best equipment, equipment procedures, and dental procedures.*

*It is the responsibility of the practice owner to cross-check and verify the legality, permissibility, technical correctness, and applicability of all the following information, prior to implementation. All ePractice Manager job descriptions cover the essential basics of each job but cannot cover and fit the specific activities of every office, as each is unique. Therefore, you should use this job description as a template to edit, as needed* ***prior to implementation*** *to best fit your office.*

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# GENERAL DESCRIPTION

## Purpose

The purpose of the dental hygienist role is to provide ongoing preventative oral care by cleaning, scaling, and polishing teeth to prevent decay and gum disease. The dental hygienist is also responsible for fully educating patients on proper preventative and maintenance measures, periodontal conditions, and any treatments needed to maintain dental health.

## Primary Objectives

The dental hygienist’s primary objectives are to ensure patients

* are happy and satisfied with the swift, complete, and gentle prophylaxis received
* are aware of any existing periodontal conditions and understand what steps must be taken to correct them
* understand and are motivated to continue with preventative care as indicated by the hygienist

## Required Skills

The dental hygienist position requires the following skills:

* State licensure
* Excellent manual dexterity
* Superior communication and customer service skills
* Mastery of dental terminology and procedures
* Highly skilled in the use of standard office equipment including telephones, calculators, copiers, fax machines, computers, and computer software (e.g., Microsoft Excel, Word, Practice Management software, etc.)
* Ability to work cooperatively with management, staff, and patients
* Ability to study and learn quickly
* Knowledge of any additional education and certifications appropriate to their position
* Familiarity with handpieces and instruments used in the office
* Knowledge of ergonomic principles relating to dentistry
* Current knowledge of OSHA and HIPAA rules and regulations as applicable to the operatory and the office as a whole
* Valid x-ray certification
* As required, CPR & first aid certification

## Supervisory Responsibilities

The dental hygienist holds no supervisory responsibilities.

## Physical Demands

The dental hygienist must be able to

* remain in a stationary position 50% of the time
* position self to perform hygiene procedures above patients
* occasionally move around to access dental supplies/tools, equipment, etc.
* constantly operate dental instruments, such as an x-ray machine and impression materials
* frequently and accurately communicate with patients who have inquiries about their dental health and proposed dental plans
* frequently move items and equipment weighing up to \_\_\_ pounds

## Hours

This is an hourly position with a minimum of 40 hours per week in the office Monday through Friday.

## Metrics

The dental hygienist monitors success by watching key performance indicators[[1]](#footnote-1) (KPIs):

* Total dollar value of production by the dental hygienist

An upward trend of this metric on a graph would indicate that the dental hygienist is successfully meeting the objectives of the position and the needs of the practice. If these trends plateau or begin to decline, the dental hygienist would take action to determine the reason(s) for the decline and correct it/them.

## Primary Duties

The dental hygienist has a wide variety of responsibilities. The following list summarizes some of these key responsibilities:

* Records treatment information on the patient’s chart, including treatment rendered, type of treatment planned, and the amount of chair time, doctor time, and assistant time needed for the next appointment
* Stays on schedule at all times
* Turns equipment on in the morning and off at night
* Sets up treatment room(s) for each patient
* Provides customer service support to patients by escorting them to and from the treatment room
* Exposes radiographs
* Records evaluation of periodontal conditions, occlusal relations, and the extent of prophylaxis on the dental chart to ensure a complete diagnosis and proper treatment plan by the dentist
* Administers nitrous oxide and oxygen to patients as applicable
* Removes excess cement from supragingival surfaces of teeth
* Assists the doctor during clinical exams and records findings and recommendations
* Performs oral cancer exams on all patients
* Scales, polishes, and applies fluoride to patient’s teeth
* Inspects patient’s oral cavity in order to chart lesions, existing restorations, and missing teeth
* Evaluates gingival health and health of all oral tissue
* Executes root planing and myofunctional evaluations
* Educates patients on the importance of preventative care, the disease process, and the role of bacteria
* Provides appropriate educational literature and instruction on home care
* Polishes restorations and appliances (e.g., partials, dentures, etc.)
* Prepares all treatment rooms including, but not limited to, set-up, decontamination, sterilization and sharpening of all instruments, cleaning handpieces and room, restocking supplies, etc.
* Communicates with appropriate staff to ensure that the patient’s next treatment is scheduled before the patient leaves the practice
* Implements and monitors recall system
* Calls patients who are overdue for recall as appropriate
* Helps fill the patient schedule when there are openings to keep production levels high each day
* Participates in and contributes to staff meetings
* Maintains a high standard for personal appearance and hygiene
* Assists in the office as requested by the doctor or office manager when not working on hygiene procedures or recall
* Tracks KPIs on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis

## Patient Confidentiality[[2]](#footnote-2)

Maintaining patient confidentiality is a serious matter affecting patient trust, and it is regulated under federal law. For this reason, great care must be taken to ensure that patient information is not made available to any unauthorized persons.

The dental hygienist understands and enforces all related patient confidentiality rules and best practices.

# SIGNATURE

This job description has been authorized by the managing partner. The employee’s signature below constitutes their understanding of the requirements, essential functions, and duties of the positions. Job performance reviews will be conducted annually.

Employee Printed Name Date

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |

Employee Signature

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1. Key Performance Indicator (KPI) – a measurable value used to monitor some crucial factor of business operations, for example, the dollar value of services delivered. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please refer to the ePM **General Staff Job Description** for information on patient confidentiality and its importance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)