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Surgical Assistant   
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 surgical assistant role is to professionally assist and facilitate the doctor with all procedures in order to enable the doctor to the provide the highest quality care for all patients in the most efficient manner. This also ensure the best possible experience for the patient.

## Primary Objectives

The surgical assistant’s primary objectives are to

* support the doctor in efficiently and effectively treating patients to maximize production
* ensure patients are fully satisfied with their service and experience

## Required Skills

The surgical assistant position requires the following skills:

* Excellent manual dexterity
* Intermediate computer skills
* Ability to study and learn quickly
* Education and certification appropriate to the position
* Mastery of dental terminology and procedures
* Superior communication and customer service skills
* Familiarity with all handpieces and instruments used in the office
* Knowledge of ergonomic principles relating to dentistry
* Current Basic Life Support and CPR certification
* Current knowledge of OSHA and HIPAA rules and regulations as applicable to the operatory and the office as a whole

## Facilities and Equipment Required

It is recommended that the surgical assistant have access to

* a private office or conference room
* a computer with contact management software, email, telephone, etc.,
* visual tools such as models, flip charts, and other materials for explaining dental procedures and anatomy
* digital and/or intraoral camera equipment as appropriate to the practice

## Supervisory Responsibilities

The surgical assistant holds no supervisory responsibilities.

## Physical Demands

The surgical assistant must be able to

* remain in a stationary position 50% of the time
* position self to pass instruments to the doctor 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.

## Primary Duties

The surgical assistant has a wide variety of responsibilities. The following list summarizes some of these key responsibilities.

* Participates in morning huddles by
  + reviewing patient charts for the day with the dental team
  + participating in procedures discussions
  + discussing any special equipment to be used
  + noting any special patient needs
  + reviewing the day’s schedule
* Sets up the operatories by
  + being familiar with each patient and their scheduled treatment
  + being familiar with dental equipment setups used in the office
  + setting up surgical trays for procedures, as needed
  + preparing anesthetics
  + ensuring operatories are appropriately equipped and stocked
  + inventorying supplies regularly and notifying the proper person of reordering needs
  + notifying the lead assistant when equipment needs maintenance or repair
* Seats patients by
  + greeting them in the waiting room
  + ensuring they feel relaxed and welcome
  + mentioning relevant events noted in their file (e.g., birthdays and anniversaries)
  + ensuring that a driver is accompanying sedation patients
  + escorting them to the operatory
  + seating them and adjusting the chair
  + putting patient napkin and any protective equipment on them
* Reviews medical histories by
  + noting any and all of the patient’s
    - current medical problems
    - recent hospital stays
    - prescriptions and over-the-counter medications
    - nutritional supplements
    - medication allergies
    - personal habits related to eating, drinking, and smoking
  + verifying that all prescribed medications have been taken
  + ensuring all consent forms are signed
  + taking blood pressures and recording in chart as needed per procedure
  + verifying when patient’s last meal was eaten as needed per procedure
  + keeping patient charts secure in accordance with federal law
* Performs preparatory procedures by
  + explaining procedures to patients
  + connecting patients to monitors
  + understanding basic extraction tray set up, the forceps needed, root tip picks, and bite blocks
  + understanding specialty instruments, including implant, skeletal, TMJ, retractors, never hooks, sinus lift, and O.R. cases
* Maintains sanitary conditions by
  + wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  + washing hands as required by protocols
  + staying knowledgeable about and following all best practices for infection control and to avoid cross-contamination and maintain sterile fields
  + pulling and setting up sterile cases as needed
* Completes chairside assistance by
  + making the dentist aware of any changes in a patient’s medical history
  + monitoring the patient while the dentist administers anesthesia
  + carefully passing and retrieving instruments
  + following safety procedures regarding needles
  + using the suction
  + maintaining a clear working field for the surgeon
  + anticipating the needs of the doctor during treatment
  + checking the patient’s comfort during treatment and comforting them when necessary
  + watching monitors during procedures
* Provides post-treatment and/or operative care to patients by
  + educating them on post-treatment and/or operative care
  + escorting them to the reception area after treatment
  + following up with them to ensure they are recovering as expected
  + informing the patient/financial coordinators of the patient’s scheduling needs for follow-up or continuing care visits
* Cleans and disinfects the operatories by
  + properly disposing of contaminated materials
  + sterilizing contaminated instruments and returning them to their storage location
  + sanitizing countertops, handles, chairs and headrests, tray tables, and other equipment
  + replacing plastic covers over equipment when necessary
  + adhering to all infection control procedures
* Manages equipment by
  + continually checking treatment rooms for cleanliness
  + turning on/off treatment room equipment
  + cleaning the treatment room after each visit
  + storing instruments in their designated places
  + keeping all sterilizing equipment clean and fully operational
  + maintaining supply inventory
* Completing other functions by
  + helping to maintain the daily schedule
  + understanding and abiding by federal patient privacy regulations
  + attending continuing education as required
  + maintaining a current job description
  + maintaining office inventory, stock rooms and prep gauze packs
  + making syringes
  + doing laundry, keeping the office organized and tidy, and performing any other needed overall office maintenance

## Patient Confidentiality[[1]](#footnote-1)

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 surgical assistant 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

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

Employee Signature

|  |
| --- |
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1. Please refer to the ePM **General Staff Job Description** for information on patient confidentiality and its importance. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)