

NATURE OF WORK

A dental hygienist is a licensed preventive oral health care professional who provides educational, clinical and therapeutic services to the public in a variety of settings. The dental hygienist works in collaboration with the dental health care team, as well as other medical personnel to prevent oral disease and promote overall health.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Flexible scheduling is a distinctive feature of this job. Full-time, part-time, evening and weekend schedules are widely available. Dental hygienists work in clean, well-light offices. Important health safeguards include adherence to strict radiological and anesthetic procedures and to the use of appropriate protective devices. Dental hygienists wear safety glasses, masks, and gloves to protect themselves and patients from infectious diseases. Public dental health is an emerging employment opportunity, allowing dental hygienists to educate the public in schools, hospitals and other residential care facilities. Dental hygienists can also be employed as faculty members in educational institutions or conducting research at universities. The corporate sector employs dental hygienists as sales representatives and educational consultants.

TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

Dental hygienists must be licensed by the state in which they practice. To qualify for licensure, a candidate must graduate from an accredited dental hygiene school and pass both a written and a clinical examination. Most states also require an examination on the legal aspects of dental hygiene practice.

JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of dental hygienists is expected to grow much faster than average for all occupations through 2016, ranking among the fastest growing occupations, in response to increasing demand for dental care and greater use of hygienists.

For further information go to:

www.sanjuancollege.edu/hygiene
www.sanjuancollege.edu/pages/158.asp
www.careers-nm.org; www.adha.org
www.bls.gov/oco/ocos097.htm

CAREER OPTIONS

Private practice; public health; higher education; dental researcher and corporate salesperson

ESTIMATED SALARY RANGE

New Mexico — \$67,927 - \$83,207

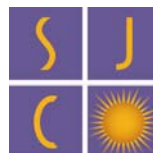
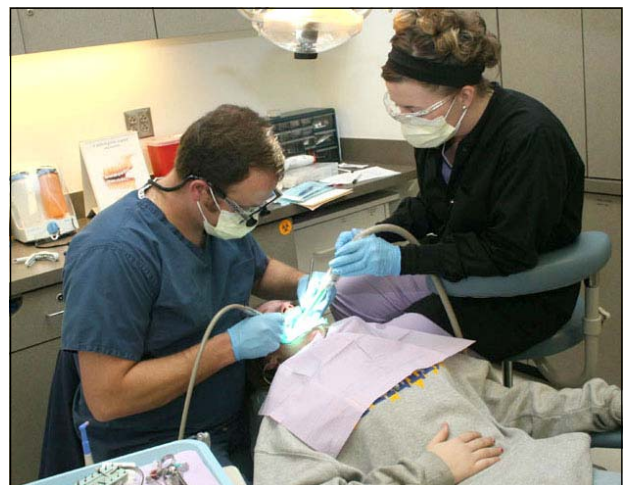
Nationally — \$53,780 - \$76,870

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Dental assistants, physician assistants, and nurses

SJC Basic Program Requirements

- Apply to and be accepted by San Juan College.
- Have 15 credit hours of general education and a college accumulative GPA of 2.75 or better. All prerequisite courses must be successfully completed prior to entering the program, must have been taken within the last 5 years, and have a minimum of a "C" grade.
- The scores from the Health Occupations Basic Entrance Test (HOBET) must be on file in the Dental Program Office.
- Must have completed 12 total hours of documented hygienist observation time in 3 different dental offices.
- Attended Dental Programs information session.
- Submitted a completed application by April 1.
- This is a competitive, selective program; not everyone who applies gets in.



*Most of this information is from the Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09