

GDC Scope of Practice Dental hygienists

Dental hygienists are registered dental professionals who help patients maintain their oral health by preventing and treating periodontal disease and promoting good oral health practice. They carry out treatment direct to patients or under prescription from a dentist. As a dental hygienist, you can undertake the following if you are trained, competent and indemnified:

Provide dental hygiene care to a wide range of patients
Obtain a detailed dental history from patients and evaluate their medical history
Carry out a clinical examination within their competence
Complete periodontal examination and charting and use indices to screen and monitor periodontal disease
Diagnose and treatment plan within their competence
Prescribe radiographs
Take, process and interpret various film views used in general dental practice
Plan the delivery of care for patients
Give appropriate patient advice
Provide preventive oral care to patients and liaise with dentists over the treatment of caries, periodontal disease and wear
Undertake supragingival and subgingival scaling and root surface debridement using manual and powered instruments
Use appropriate anti-microbial therapy to manage plaque related diseases
Adjust restored surfaces in relation to periodontal treatment
Apply topical treatments and fissure sealants
Give patients advice on how to stop smoking
Take intra and extra-oral photographs
Give infiltration and inferior dental block analgesia
Place temporary dressings and re-cement crowns with temporary cement
Place rubber dam
Take impressions
Care of implants and treatment of peri-implant tissues
Identify anatomical features, recognise abnormalities and interpret common pathology
Carry out oral cancer screening
If necessary, refer patients to other healthcare professionals
Keep full, accurate and contemporaneous patient records
If working on prescription, vary the detail but not the direction of the prescription according to patient needs.

Additional skills which dental hygienists might develop include:

Tooth whitening to the prescription of a dentist
Administering inhalation sedation
Removing sutures after the wound has been checked by a dentist

Dental hygienists do not:

Restore teeth, carry out pulp treatments, adjust unrestored surfaces, extract teeth

GDC Scope of Practice Dental Therapists

Dental therapists are registered dental professionals who carry out certain items of dental treatment direct to patients or under prescription from a dentist. As a dental therapist, you can undertake the following if you are trained, competent and indemnified:

Obtain a detailed dental history from patients and evaluate their medical history
Carry out a clinical examination within their competence
Complete periodontal examination and charting and use indices to screen and monitor periodontal disease
Diagnose and treatment plan within their competence
Prescribe radiographs
Take, process and interpret various film views used in general dental practice
Plan the delivery of care for patients
Give appropriate patient advice
Provide preventive oral care to patients and liaise with dentists over the treatment of caries, periodontal disease & wear
Undertake supragingival and subgingival scaling and root surface debridement using manual and powered instruments
Use appropriate anti-microbial therapy to manage plaque related diseases
Adjust restored surfaces in relation to periodontal treatment
Apply topical treatments and fissure sealants
Give patients advice on how to stop smoking
Take intra and extra-oral photographs
Give infiltration and inferior dental block analgesia
Place temporary dressings and re-cement crowns with temporary cement
Place rubber dam
Take impressions
Care of implants and treatment of peri-implant tissues
Carry out direct restorations on primary and secondary teeth
Carry out pulpotomies on primary teeth
Extract primary teeth
Place pre-formed crowns on primary teeth
Identify anatomical features, recognise abnormalities and interpret common pathology
Carry out oral cancer screening
If necessary, refer patients to other healthcare professionals
Keep full, accurate and contemporaneous patient records
If working on prescription, vary the detail but not the direction of the prescription according to patient needs. For example, the number of surfaces to be restored or the material to be used.

Additional skills which dental therapists could develop include:

Carrying out tooth whitening to the prescription of a dentist
Administering inhalation sedation
Removing sutures after the wound has been checked by a dentist