

# Dental Hygienists

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Working as a Dental Hygienist [NOC 2021: 32111 / NOC 2016: 3222]

### ***Job Description***

***Dental hygienists*** work with dentists to provide care for people's teeth, gums, and mouths. You help maintain the oral health of your patients.

As a dental hygienist you perform the following duties:

- Talk to patients about their dental care needs
- Do initial dental assessments
- Take dental impressions
- Remove stains and deposits from teeth to prevent tooth and root decay
- Clean the gums to prevent gum disease
- Apply fluoride treatment
- Take and develop X-rays
- May perform restorative and orthodontic procedures under the direction of a dentist
- May supervise dental assistants

Source:

WorkBC Career Profile <https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>

## Industry Overview

The job outlook for Dental Hygienists is good throughout BC. There is particularly high demand for hygienists in the rural regions of the province.

Dental hygienists may have a much broader scope of responsibilities than in the past. You may be a dental health-care educator who instructs patients in oral hygiene procedures and promotes community dental health programs. The role of dental hygienists in areas outside clinical practices, such as community health centres and residential care facilities is expected to increase.

## Job Outlook in BC

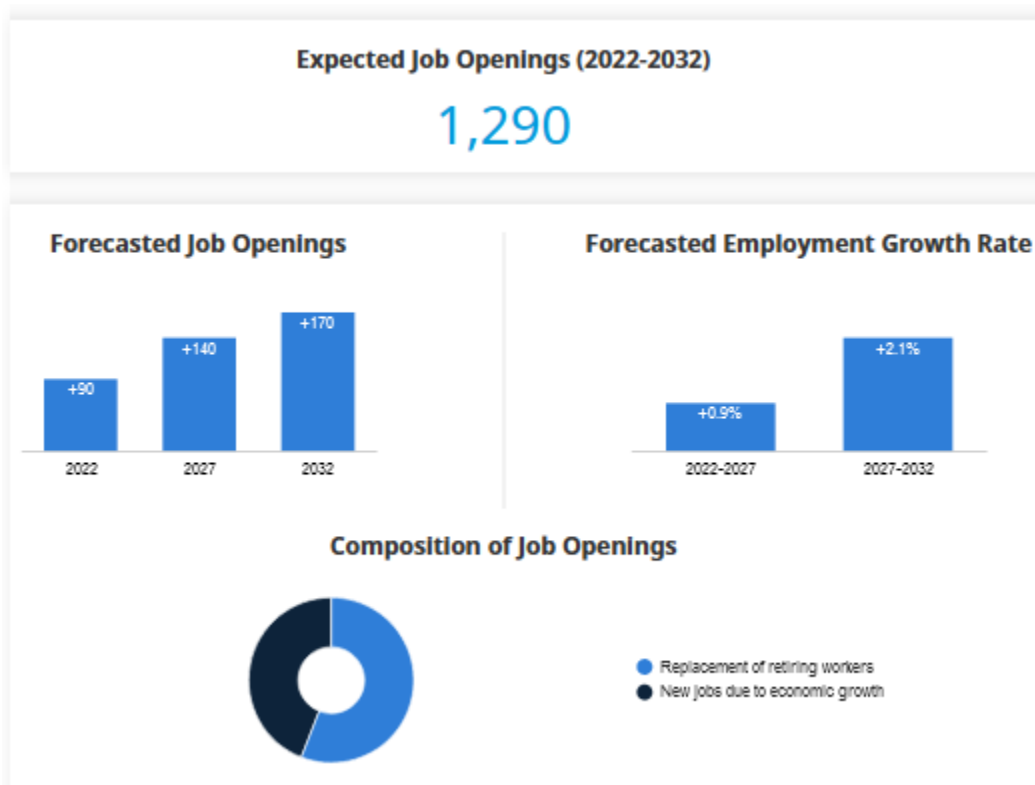


Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2022-2023:

Region	Employment in 2022	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island / Coast	510	2.5%	250
Lower Mainland / Southwest	2,000	1.9%	850
Thompson-Okanagan	520	0.2%	130
Cariboo	190	-0.5%	0
Kootenay	80	0.0%	0
Northeast	70	-1.5%	-10
North Coast & Nechako	60	0.0%	0

You can learn more about working as a dental hygienist in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Profile**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- **Career Cruising**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profile for Dental Hygienist]  
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

### ***Types of Employers***

Many dental hygienists work in private dental offices. You may also find employment in hospitals, clinics, educational institutions or government agencies and private industry.

### ***Salary***

The median annual salary for dental hygienists working full-time in BC is \$91,975.

In addition to a salary, most full-time dental hygienists receive health and dental benefits, paid sick days, and paid vacations.

Source: WorkBC & Career Cruising

## Dental Hygienists

### *A guide for newcomers to British Columbia*

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for Dental Hygienists in BC regions:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	37.50	45.18	55.00
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	37.50	45.18	55.00
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	42.84	47.00	50.00
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	35.00	45.00	55.00
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	37.50	45.18	55.00
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	37.50	45.18	55.00

Source: Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages> [Search Dental Hygienist]

### **Working Hours**

Full-time dental hygienists usually work a 5-day, 32-40 hour week. Overtime may be necessary on occasion.

Some hygienists work on a part-time schedule or work evenings and weekends.

## **2. Skills, Education and Experience**

### **Skills**

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Well organized and detail oriented
- Ability to solve problems and make decisions
- Should have a strong back, good eyesight and a high degree of manual dexterity
- Enjoy working with people and as part of a team

### ***Education and Experience***

To work as a dental hygienist in BC you require:

- completion of an accredited diploma or bachelor-level degree program in dental hygiene
- registration with the BC College of Oral Health Professionals [BCCOHP]

### ***Qualifications***

***This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.***

You must be registered with the **BC College of Oral Health Professionals [BCCOHP]** in order to work as a Dental Hygienist in BC.

In order to register you require:

- Graduation from a Dental Hygiene Program recognized by the College
- Completion of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Exam
- Demonstration of current Continuing Competency (CC) credits
- Completion of the Jurisprudence Education Module
- Possession of professional negligence insurance
- Demonstration of good standing in every jurisdiction in which you are currently or previously registered to practice dental hygiene
- Demonstration of good character
- Authorization for a criminal record
- Submission of a complete registration application form and the applicable fees.

For more information see:

#### **BC College of Oral Health Professionals**

- General Information <https://oralhealthbc.ca/>

- Registered Dental Hygienists Registration Requirements  
<https://oralhealthbc.ca/register-renew/dh-registration-renewal/>

### **Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada**

- National Dental Hygiene Certification Exam  
<https://www.fdhrc.ca/pages/ndhce/>
- General Information <https://www.fdhrc.ca/>

### ***Internationally Trained Dental Hygienist***

In order to be eligible for registration in BC, foreign-trained dental hygienists and recent graduates of programs not approved by the BC College of Oral Health Professionals must also successfully complete the **Canadian Performance Exam in Dental Hygiene (CPEDH)** offered by the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada. This approved exam determines your competence and readiness to practice.

More information:

#### **Canadian Performance Exam in Dental Hygiene**

<https://www.fdhrc.ca/pages/cpedh/>

## **3. Finding Jobs**

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional association publications.

### ***Local Newspapers***

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily and the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

### ***Online Job Postings***

- **UBC Faculty of Dentistry – Professional Job Postings**  
<https://www.dentistry.ubc.ca/alumni/professional-posting-services-for-alumni/>
- **Indeed.com**  
<https://www.indeed.ca>  
Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards
- **WorkBC Job Search**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs>

### ***Professional Associations’ Career Resources***

- **British Columbia Dental Association – Certified Dental Hygienist Job Postings**  
<https://bcdental.org/cda-alliance-job-board/>

### ***Identifying the Right Position***

When you browse job advertisements, you’ll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For dental hygienists look for these related job titles

- registered dental hygienists
- dental nurse
- dental hygiene technician
- community dental hygienist

Source: NOC <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca>



## ***Creating a List of Potential Employers***

You can use directories to produce lists of dentist offices and health care clinics in BC. Contact them directly to find out if they are hiring.

- **BC Dental Association – Find a Dentist**

<https://www.yourdentalhealth.ca/visiting-your-dentist/find-a-dentist/>

- **Guide to Canadian Health Care Facilities**

Available at the Central Library

362.105 C212ca

- **Reference Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "*dentists*" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

***NOTE:*** *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

## 4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter. These should identify the position you are applying for and summarize your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>
- **Networking for Employment**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

## 5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

### ***Industry Associations***

Associations for Dental Hygienists in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **BC College of Oral Health Professionals**  
<https://oralhealthbc.ca/>
- **British Columbia Dental Hygienists Association**  
<https://www.bcdha.com/>
- **Canadian Dental Hygienists Association**  
<https://www.cdha.ca/>
- **Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada**  
[https://www.fdhrc.ca](https://www.fdhrc.ca/)

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library,  
Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the  
Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.*