

Pathway to Dental Hygienist

What does a Dental Hygienist do? How's the job outlook?

Dental hygienists take dental x-rays, carry out teeth cleanings, assist dentists during dental procedures and document patient care and treatment plans. They will also educate patients about oral hygiene techniques, such as how to brush and floss correctly.

Overall employment of dental hygienists is projected to grow 11 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations. Much of that is the result of needing to replace workers who transfer to different occupations and/or are retiring. The annual mean wage for dental hygienists in the Denver Metro area is approximately \$91,590.*

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Dental Hygienists, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm#tab-1>.



How do I become a Dental Hygienist?

Dental hygienists get an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) in dental hygiene. They must also be licensed in the state in which they work. After successful completion of a dental hygiene program, students are then eligible to take the National Board Dental Hygiene Exam (NBDHE) to become a registered dental hygienist. Registered dental hygienists who wish to expand upon their education and increase their employment options may also pursue a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) in dental hygiene.

There are three community colleges in the state of Colorado that offer an Associate of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene including: Community College of Denver (CCD), Pueblo Community College (PCC) and Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC).

Course prerequisites required for those interested in pursuing CCD's dental hygiene program are as follows:

Anatomy & Physiology I and II* – BIO 2310 and BIO 2320; 2 semesters
General Microbiology*– BIO 2400; 1 semester
Principles of Chemistry* – CHE 1100; 1 semester
Introduction to Organic & Biological Chemistry* – CHE 2100; 1 semester
English Composition – ENG 1010; 1 semester
Introductory Psychology – PSY 1001; 1 semester
Introduction to Sociology – SOC 1010; 1 semester
Public Speaking – CAS 1010; 1 semester

*Be aware that these courses also have prerequisites of their own at MSU Denver. They include the following:

- BIO 2310 – prerequisite includes BIO 1080/1090 – General Biology I lecture/lab
- BIO 2320 – prerequisite includes BIO 2310 – A&P I
- BIO 2400 – prerequisites include BIO 1080/1090 - General Biology I lecture/lab, BIO 1081/1091 – General Biology II lecture/lab and one semester of chemistry
- CHE 1100 – prerequisite/corequisite includes college algebra
- CHE 2100 – prerequisite includes CHE 1100 or CHE 1810 (General Chemistry II)

Biology Faculty Advisor who can guide you for this path is:

Dr. Clare Hays

email: haysc@msudenver.edu

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1. Dental hygiene science prerequisites must show a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and be current to within seven years of the date the program begins.
2. Dental hygiene education general prerequisites must show a cumulative GPA of 2.5.
3. Overall cumulative GPA (combination of general and science dental hygiene prerequisites) must not be lower than 2.8.
4. A college-level equivalent math course will be required: either MAT 120, MAT 121, MAT 135, or an Accuplacer score of 70+.

CCD applications for the dental hygiene program are open annually between
September 1st and December 1st.