

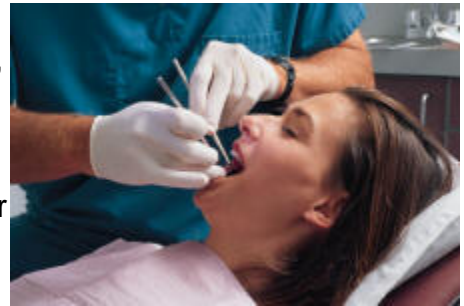


## Dentistry Overview

**Overview - Preparation - Specialty Areas -  
Day in the Life - Earnings - Employment -  
Career Path Forecast - Professional Organizations**

### Overview

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat problems with teeth or mouth tissue. They remove decay, fill cavities, examine x-rays, place protective plastic sealants on children's teeth, straighten teeth, and repair fractured teeth. They also perform corrective surgery on gums and supporting bones to treat gum diseases. Dentists extract teeth and make models and measurements for dentures to replace missing teeth.



They provide instruction on diet, brushing, flossing, the use of fluorides, and other aspects of dental care. They also administer anesthetics and write prescriptions for antibiotics and other medications.

Dentists use a variety of equipment, including x-ray machines; drills; and instruments such as mouth mirrors, probes, forceps, brushes, and scalpels.

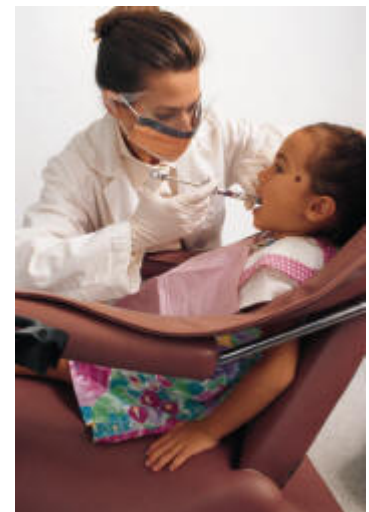


They wear masks, gloves, and safety glasses to protect themselves and their patients from infectious diseases.

### Preparation

All 50 States and the District of Columbia require dentists to be licensed. To qualify for a license in most States, candidates must graduate from one of the 56 dental schools accredited by the American Dental Association's (ADA's) Commission on Dental Accreditation, and then must pass written and practical examinations.

Dental schools require a minimum of 2 years of college-level pre-dental education prior to admittance. Most dental students have at least a bachelor's degree before entering dental school, although a few applicants are accepted to dental school after 2 or 3 years of college and complete their bachelor's degree while attending dental school.



High school and college students who want to become dentists should take courses in biology, chemistry, physics, health, and mathematics. College undergraduates planning on applying to dental school are required to take many science courses. Because of this, some choose a major in a science, such as biology or chemistry, while others take the required science coursework while pursuing a major in another subject.



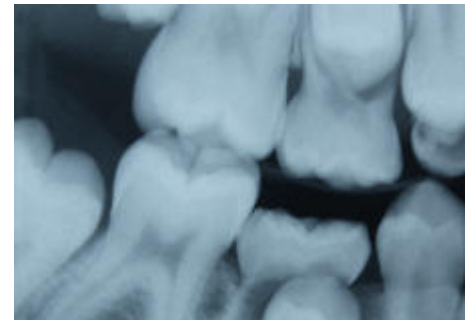
All dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). When selecting students, schools consider scores earned on the DAT, applicants' grade point averages, and information gathered through recommendations and interviews. Competition for admission to dental school is keen.

Dental school usually lasts 4 academic years. Studies begin with classroom instruction and laboratory work in science, including anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and physiology. Beginning courses in clinical sciences, including laboratory techniques, are also completed. During the last 2 years, students treat patients, usually in dental clinics, under the supervision of licensed dentists. Most dental schools award the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS). Others award an equivalent degree, Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD).

Some dental school graduates work for established dentists as associates for 1 to 2 years to gain experience and save money to equip an office of their own. Most dental school graduates, however, purchase an established practice or open a new one immediately after graduation.

### ► **Licensure**

Licensing is required to practice as a dentist. In most States, licensure requires passing written and practical examinations in addition to having a degree from an accredited dental school. Candidates may fulfill the written part of the State licensing requirements by passing the National Board Dental Examinations. Individual States or regional testing agencies administer the written or practical examinations.



In 2006, 17 States licensed or certified dentists who intended to practice in a specialty area. Requirements include 2 to 4 years of postgraduate education and, in some cases, the completion of a special State examination. Most State licenses permit dentists to engage in both general and specialized practice.

### ► **Other Qualifications**

Dentistry requires diagnostic ability and manual skills. Dentists should have good visual memory, excellent judgment regarding space, shape, and color, a high degree of manual dexterity, and scientific ability. Good business sense, self-discipline, and good communication skills are helpful for success in private practice.

## "Dentistry Overview"

## ► Accredited Programs

The American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation is the nationally recognized accrediting authority for dental education accreditation. Below is a listing of all accredited dental education programs in the United States. Graduates receive either a DDS or DMD degree. Dentists who want to teach or conduct research usually spend an additional 2 to 5 years in advanced dental training, in programs operated by dental schools or hospitals. A recent survey by the American Dental Education Association showed that 11 percent of new graduates enrolled in postgraduate training programs to prepare for a dental specialty.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health</li><li>• Baylor College of Dentistry</li><li>• Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Case Western Reserve Univ. School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Columbia University College of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Creighton University School of Dentistry</li><li>• Harvard University School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Howard University College of Dentistry</li><li>• Indiana University School of Dentistry</li><li>• Loma Linda University School of Dentistry</li><li>• Louisiana State University School of Dentistry</li><li>• Marquette University School of Dentistry</li><li>• Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry</li><li>• Medical University of South Carolina College of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry</li><li>• New York University College of Dentistry</li><li>• Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Ohio State University College of Dentistry</li><li>• Oregon Health and Science University School of Dentistry</li><li>• Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• State University of New York at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• State University of New York at Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• Temple University School of Dentistry</li><li>• The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston</li><li>• Tufts University School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• University of Alabama School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of California at Los Angeles School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of California at San Francisco School of Dentistry</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Florida College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Iowa College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Kentucky College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Louisville School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Maryland Baltimore College of Dental Surgery</li><li>• University of Medicine &amp; Dentistry of New Jersey</li><li>• University of Michigan School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Minnesota School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Mississippi School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• University of North Carolina School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine</li><li>• University of Puerto Rico School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Southern California School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Tennessee College of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School</li><li>• University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry</li><li>• University of Washington-Health Sciences School of Dentistry</li><li>• Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry</li></ul> |
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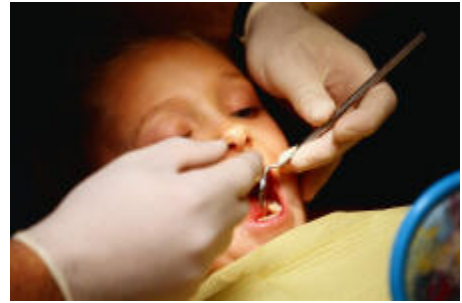
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## Specialty Areas

Dentists hold about 161,000 jobs in the United States. About one third of dentists are self-employed and not incorporated. Almost all dentists work in private practice. According to the American Dental Association, about 3 out of 4 dentists in private practice are sole proprietors, and 1 in 7 belongs to a partnership. A few salaried dentists work in hospitals and offices of physicians.



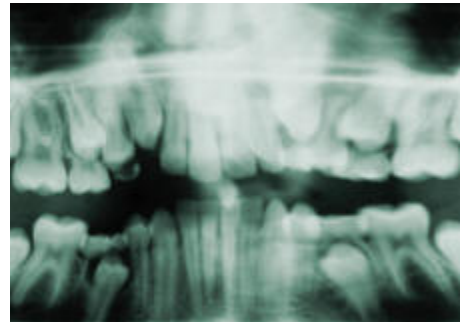
Employment is distributed among general practitioners and specialists as follows:

Dentists, general	136,000
Orthodontists	9,200
Oral and maxillofacial surgeons	7,700
Prosthodontists	1,000
Dentists, all other specialists	6,900

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## Day in the Life

Most dentists work 4 or 5 days a week. Some work evenings and weekends to meet their patients' needs. Most full-time dentists work between 35 and 40 hours a week, but others work more. Initially, dentists may work more hours as they establish their practice. Experienced dentists often work fewer hours. Many continue in part-time practice well beyond the usual retirement age.



Most dentists are solo practitioners, meaning that they own their own businesses and work alone or with a small staff. Some dentists have partners, and a few work for other dentists as associate dentists.

Dentists in private practice oversee a variety of administrative tasks, including bookkeeping and buying equipment and supplies. They may employ and supervise dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental laboratory technicians, and receptionists.

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## Earnings

Median annual earnings of salaried dentists is about \$136,960. Earnings vary according to number of years in practice, location, hours worked, and specialty. Self-employed dentists in private practice tend to earn more than do salaried dentists. Dentists who are salaried often receive benefits paid by their employer, with health insurance and malpractice insurance being among the most common. However, like other business owners, self-employed dentists must provide their own health insurance, life insurance, retirement plans, and other benefits.



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## Employment

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Dentists, general	128,000
Orthodontists	10,000
Oral and maxillofacial surgeons	6,000
Prosthodontists	1,000
Dentists, all other specialists	5,000

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## Career Path Forecast

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of dentists is projected to grow nine percent through 2016, about as fast as the average for all occupations. The demand for dental services is expected to continue to increase. The overall population is growing, particularly the number of older people, which will increase the demand for dental care. As members of the baby-boom generation advance into middle age, a large number will need complicated dental work, such as bridges. In addition, elderly people are more likely to retain their teeth than were their predecessors, so they will require much more care than in the past. The younger generation will continue to need preventive checkups despite an overall increase in the dental health of the public over the last few decades. Recently, some private insurance providers have increased their dental coverage. If this trend continues, those with new or expanded dental insurance will be more likely to visit a dentist than in the past.



Also, while they are currently a small proportion of dental expenditures, cosmetic dental services, such as fitting braces for adults as well as children and providing teeth-whitening treatments, have become increasingly popular.

However, employment of dentists is not expected to keep pace with the increased demand for dental services. Productivity increases from new technology, as well as having dental hygienists and assistants perform some tasks, will allow dentists to perform more work than they have in the past. As their practices expand, dentists are likely to hire more hygienists and dental assistants to handle routine services.

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Dentists will increasingly provide care and instruction aimed at preventing the loss of teeth, rather than simply providing treatments such as fillings. Improvements in dental technology also will allow dentists to offer more effective and less painful treatment to their patients.



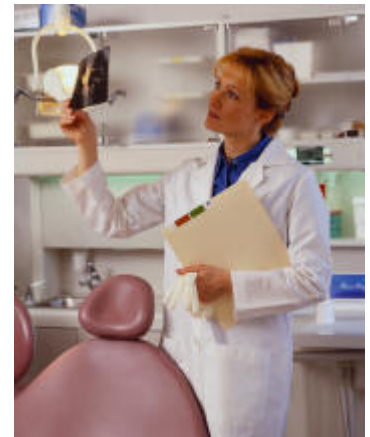
As an increasing number of dentists from the baby-boom generation reach retirement age, many of them will retire or work fewer hours. However, the number of applicants to, and graduates from, dental schools has increased in recent years. Therefore, younger dentists will be able to take over the work from older dentists who retire or cut back on hours, as well as provide dental services to accommodate the growing demand.

Demand for dental services tends to follow the business cycle, primarily because these services usually are paid for either by the patient or by private insurance companies. As a result, during slow times in the economy, demand for dental services can decrease; dentists may have difficulty finding employment, or if already in an established practice, they may work fewer hours because of reduced demand.

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## Professional Organizations

Professional organizations and associations provide a wide range of resources for planning and navigating a career in dentistry. These groups can play a key role in your development and keep you abreast of what is happening in your industry. Associations promote the interests of their members and provide a network of contacts that can help you find jobs and move your career forward. They can offer a variety of services including job referral services, continuing education courses, insurance, travel benefits, periodicals, and meeting and conference opportunities. A broader list of professional associations is also available at [www.careercornerstone.org](http://www.careercornerstone.org).



► **American Dental Association ([www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org))**

The American Dental Association began in 1859, and with over 153,000 members is the largest and oldest national dental association.

► **American Dental Education Association ([www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org))**

The American Dental Education Association is the leading national organization for dental education. Its members include all U.S. and Canadian dental schools, advanced dental education programs, hospital dental education programs, allied dental education programs, corporations, faculty, and students.

► **American Student Dental Association ([www.asdanet.org](http://www.asdanet.org))**

The American Student Dental Association is a national student-run organization that protects and advances the rights, interests, and welfare of students pursuing careers in dentistry. It introduces students to lifelong involvement in organized dentistry and provides services, information, education, representation and advocacy.

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