



## CAREER LYNX | Exploring Careers in Dentistry

Students will learn about different careers in the field of dentistry.

Students will use the newspaper to identify important information and make inferences about job skills.

Students will compare and contrast dentistry with another health career by obtaining and interpreting database information.

### IT STARTS NOW

Exploring careers is one of the most important steps that you can take as a student to prepare yourself for a fulfilling future. This allows you to open your eyes to the world around you and consider all of the possibilities. By learning more about different career options, you can identify which careers are a good fit for your talents and interests and consider what career you may want to pursue.

When you identify a career of interest, you are setting a goal. A goal is a way to think about what you want in the future so that you can work backwards and plan the steps you must take to stay on track. Say, for example, that you set a goal to buy a car by your 16th birthday. In order to reach this goal, you would need to decide what car you would like to buy, how much money it would cost, how you would earn money, and how much money you would need to earn every year. You may be tempted to spend your money buying other things, but keeping your sights set on your goal to buy a car helps you to stay focused. Setting a career goal involves the same planning as you think about what education, experience, and skills you need to acquire along the way.



This lesson's career exploration is dedicated to dentistry, a career that is not well understood by many students outside of their own experiences as a patient. One of the fastest growing careers, dentistry is a perfect career choice for those who enjoy helping others, problem solving, and working with their hands. As you complete the lesson, use the information that you learn to consider whether a career in dentistry may be a good fit for you.



Search your newspaper's print or online classified section to find a job listing for a dental assistant position. What information can you learn about the job? What are the qualifications to be considered for this job? What are some of the job responsibilities?



## CAREERS IN DENTISTRY

The dental field encompasses a variety of jobs that all play an important role in providing oral health care. The next time that you visit your dental office, you may identify the following individuals:



### DENTAL ASSISTANT

Dental assistants have a variety of responsibilities in the dental office. They work alongside dentists to make sure the patient is comfortable by suctioning their mouths, and they provide the dentist the instruments they need in order to perform different procedures. A high school degree and additional training is required.

### DENTIST

A dentist's day is never dull. Dentists are responsible for identifying and treating conditions in the mouth that could compromise a patient's health and comfort. Within a day's work a dentist may examine x-rays, administer anesthetics, remove decay and fill cavities, prescribe medication, perform gum surgery, extract teeth, and take impressions for retainers or dentures. A dentist, also referred to as a general dentist, requires a bachelor's degree and a DMD (Doctor of Dental Medicine) or DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) degree.

### DENTAL HYGIENIST

The work of dental hygienists focuses on oral hygiene and preventative care. Dental hygienists clean stains and calculus from teeth, apply fluoride to strengthen teeth, and place sealants to protect teeth from decay. A dental hygienist will also discuss proper oral hygiene with patients. This job requires an associate's or bachelor's degree and additional training.

### DENTAL SPECIALIST

Some dentists will undergo additional training in order to focus their work in a particular dental specialty. You are likely familiar with the work of an orthodontist, a type of dentist that specializes in ensuring that teeth are straight and properly aligned. You may have also encountered a Pediatric Dentist who focuses on treating children. Other specialties include dental public health, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, periodontics, and prosthodontics. Specialists require a bachelor's, DMD or DDS, and a Master's degree in their field.



## PREPARE NOW FOR A CAREER AS A DENTIST

There are many ways that you can begin to prepare for a career in dentistry. Read these recommendations and think about one that you could begin today. If you do not sense that a dental career is in your future, think about which of these tips can apply to other career paths as well.

- ✿ **Become a well-rounded student.** While performing well in science and math is important, so are strong reading and critical thinking skills.
- ✿ **Take advanced or honors level classes.** By pushing yourself to learn at an accelerated pace, you will develop sharp academic skills that will help you succeed.
- ✿ **Strive to become proficient or advanced in your standardized exams.** These exams measure the skills that you need to have to be prepared for the next grade and are a great benchmark towards a goal of becoming a dentist. These exams also simulate the testing environment that you will experience when you take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) when you apply to dental school.
- ✿ **Read the newspaper.** By reading the newspaper, you will not only improve your reading comprehension and critical thinking skills, but you will also become more aware of your local and global community in which you will serve as a dentist.
- ✿ **Shadow a dentist.** Call, visit, or write to a dentist near your school or home. Inform them that you are interested in learning more about dentistry and ask if you can shadow them in their office on one of your days off from school.
- ✿ **Read about dentistry.** Visit your school or local community library and talk to your librarian about how to access books and other resources about oral health and dentistry.
- ✿ **Join a Future Dentists Club at your school.** If your school does not have one, consider asking a teacher to sponsor your club. Email the CU Denver Pre-Dental Club at [ucdpredentalclub@gmail.com](mailto:ucdpredentalclub@gmail.com) for suggestions of different activities and resources that your club could use to explore dentistry.
- ✿ **Start working with your hands.** Manual dexterity and fine motor skills are very important to the work of a dentist. These skills can be developed with practice. Drawing, sewing, building models, playing a musical instrument, crafting, and woodworking are activities that can help you strengthen your fine motor skills.
- ✿ **Take a tour of the School of Dental Medicine at The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.** As the only dental school in the state of Colorado, this is the place to see the interactive and hands-on learning experience that you could experience as a dental student.
- ✿ **Share your dream with others.** Pursuing a career as a dentist requires a lot of hard work and you may encounter struggles along the way. It is important to surround yourself with family, friends, and mentors who will support you through your journey.



Use your newspaper to find a story that features another health professional such as a physician, veterinarian, nurse, pharmacist, speech language pathologist, or physical therapist. Using the text and any images, what inferences can you make about the skills that may be required in this job?

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Research this profession along with dentistry using ExploreHealthCareers.org, an interactive website that helps students explore and plan for different health careers. Follow this link to perform a search for each profession and complete the table below:

<http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/careers/careers>

<b>CAREER</b>	<b>YEARS IN SCHOOL</b>	<b>AVERAGE SALARY</b>	<b>WORKING CONDITIONS</b>



## MILO'S EXTRA CREDIT

### The Best Job

Discover why "Dentist" was selected as the #1 job in 2013:

<http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/dentist>



### Dentist Profile

Meet a dentist who graduated from the School of Dental Medicine at The University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus and learn about her experience:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFoJSXAFMhg>

### Calling Future Dentists

If you are interested in becoming a dentist, send an email to the School of Dental Medicine at [ddsadmissioninquiries@ucdenver.edu](mailto:ddsadmissioninquiries@ucdenver.edu) so that you can receive information and invitations to special dental school events. Include your name, address, birthdate, grade level, school name, and why you are interested in dentistry.

### FIFTEEN SECOND SURVEY

Help us create a resource you can use with just 4 questions:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QMG3Z5V>

### COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.